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Jesus greets his mother at Bethany, from the Oberammergau Passion Play 1910

The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada

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The Passion Play as a Phrenological Lesson

It has been my privilege to attend an illustrated lecture of the "Passion Play," and as the portraits of the peasants were thrown upon the canvas I thought at once what a proof of phrenological principles…. The most striking feature was the facial development in harmony with the characters portrayed. Their manner of life did not differ from the outlying rural districts, but in the countenance was a marked difference. The same hardy manhood, the strong, close knit features, the firm, steady, quiet bearing; but in Oberammergau there hath "descended from sire to son," an inheritance not bequeathed to any other people. For instance, in the young man who personated St. John one feels the ideal fulfilled: what serenity, aye, love, was stamped on his face like a veil softening the strong, hardy, peasant features. St. Matthew was what a spiritual fancy might paint him; and Judas, likewise, even in peasant garb, carried some of the expression that was faithfully portrayed in his role. So real the whole scene appeared that I could almost persuade myself that the centuries had rolled away, and I was standing a living witness to the sacred and hallowed influence of the Savior's earthly career.

Letter from "One of New England's Daughters,"
The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health,
March, 1891, p. 3

My apologies for getting this issue of the *Gazette* out a bit late. It is designed as a spring issue, although we are well into summer now, or at least summer weather. I was persuaded to take on the headship of my department at the University of Connecticut, while at the same time teaching a full load and going through the page proofs of an enormous book on amphibians, leaving little time to work on this issue. In the meantime, I had been casting about for an appropriate cover theme for the spring or Easter season. I searched my collection for lantern slides of Easter rabbits, Easter eggs, and the like, to no avail. Finally, I happened to acquire a set of striking photographic lantern slides of the Oberammergau Passion Play from 1910, certainly appropriate for the season. In fact, lantern slide lectures on the Passion Play were a regular feature of the Easter season in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, delivered by professional lecturers like John L. Stoddard and by amateur lecturers and church ministers. These elicited a variety of reactions, from religious inspiration to the rather odd phrenological interpretation quoted above. My research turned up a number of interesting connections between the Oberammergau Passion Play and the culture of the magic lantern, and even the birth of the cinema, and I have made this the theme of the cover article for this issue.

In a second feature article, 3-D artist and writer Ray Zone provides new information on the use of the magic lantern in early attempts at stereoscopic projection. This certainly is a timely topic, because recent newspaper articles have reported that Hollywood studios are now investing big money in 3-D movies. Erkki Huhtamo has contributed a short piece on his discoveries at a museum related to Daguerre, one of the founders of photography. There also are several book reviews and announcements, a short synopsis of recent research in academic journals related to the magic lantern, and a variety of news items and announcements by and about members of the society.

A number of people are currently writing or thinking about articles for future issues on a variety of topics related to the magic lantern, including astronomy slides, the magic lantern in Japan, and the spectacular snowflake photographs of Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley, so we can look forward to some interesting material in the future.

Long or short articles on any aspect of the history, culture, and imagery of the magic lantern are always welcome, especially those accompanied by interesting photographs of lanterns, slides, or graphic material relating to the magic lantern. Some suggested guidelines for contributors were included in the previous issue of the *Gazette*.

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"St. John" (Peter Rendl), 1890, from John L Stoddard's lecture on Oberammergau.

The Oberammergau Passion Play in Lantern Slides: The Story Behind the Pictures

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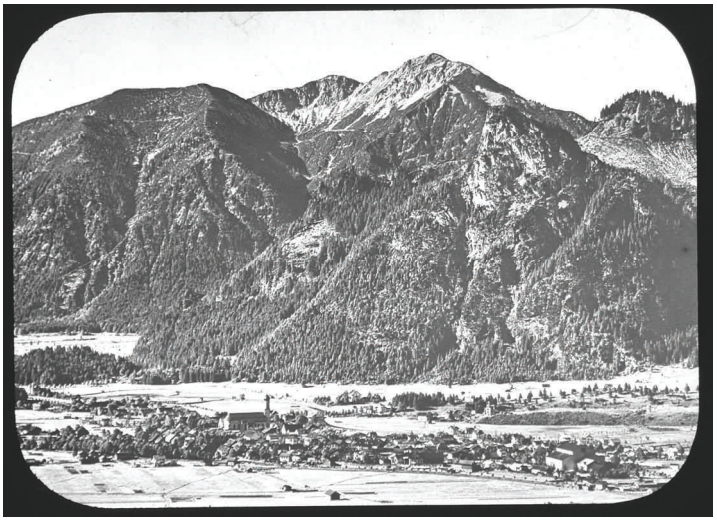
"The Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau" is the Holy Week lecture which John L. Stoddard is delivering at Daly's Theatre this week, as the fourth and last but one of his series of Lenten mantinées. The subject is extremely appropriate to the season, and those who listened to Mr. Stoddard yesterday morning found the lecture to be the most interesting of the course thus far given… Mr. Stoddard, after showing some of the surroundings of the little village hidden among the mountains and giving views of the hotels and other buildings of note in the settlement itself, led his hearers with him to the great open-air amphitheatre, in which the Passion Play is produced, and described and illustrated the large stage with its scenic fittings. The pictures were very elaborate, and brought the grand scene vividly to the imagination of all who looked upon them.

The lecturer took his audience with him into the great theatre, and described the progress of the play from the entrance of the chorus, which explains each act before it is rendered, like the chorus of the old Greek plays, to the scene of the crucifixion, and the final resurrection of Christ.

The New York Times
April 9, 1895, p. 9

The Bavarian village of Oberammergau, nestled in a scenic valley surrounded by spectacular mountains, provides the setting for the world's most famous passion play, and what may be the longest continuously running dramatic performance. The Oberammergau Passion Play, in its present form, dates from 1634. The inhabitants of the village, having been delivered from one of the deadly plagues that periodically swept through Europe, vowed to give thanks to God by presenting a play depicting the final days of Christ, ending in his crucifixion and resurrection. The actual origin of the play is much earlier—it derives from mystery and passion plays that had been widely performed in small villages throughout Europe since the Middle Ages. In Germany, passion plays were widely performed from the 14th to the 16th centuries, and they persisted even longer in Bavaria, a largely Catholic country. By one estimate, passion plays were performed in over 300 villages in Bavaria and the nearby Tyrol region of Austria.[1]

Passion plays have always been controversial, from both a religious and a political perspective. Although these plays were performed mainly by devoutly religious villagers, the Catholic Church periodically attempted to ban the production of passion plays, and by the end of the 18th century, most passion plays in Bavaria except for the Oberammergau Passion Play had ceased to exist, and even this one was banned periodically. Despite the fact that Catholic churches throughout Europe were filled with images of Christ—paintings, stained glass, and wood and stone carvings, the Church hierarchy objected to the impersonation of Christ by a living person, and particularly to the placement of a living person on the cross in the reenactment of the crucifixion.

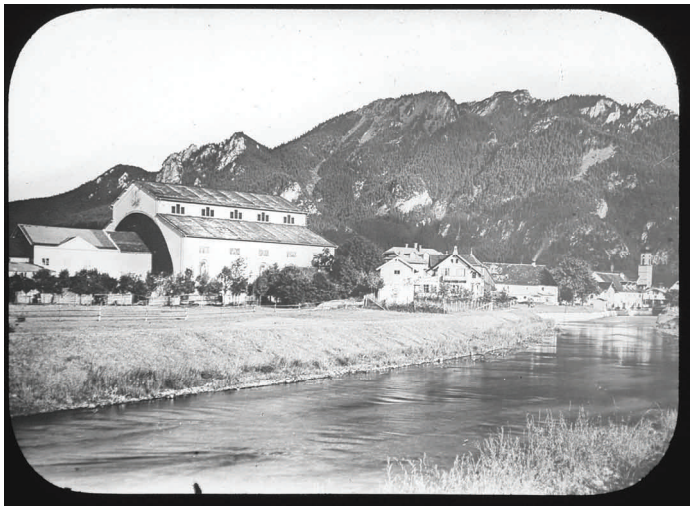


Lantern slide of the village of Oberammergau in 1910. The parish church is on the left, and the large building on the right is the Passion Play Theater. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

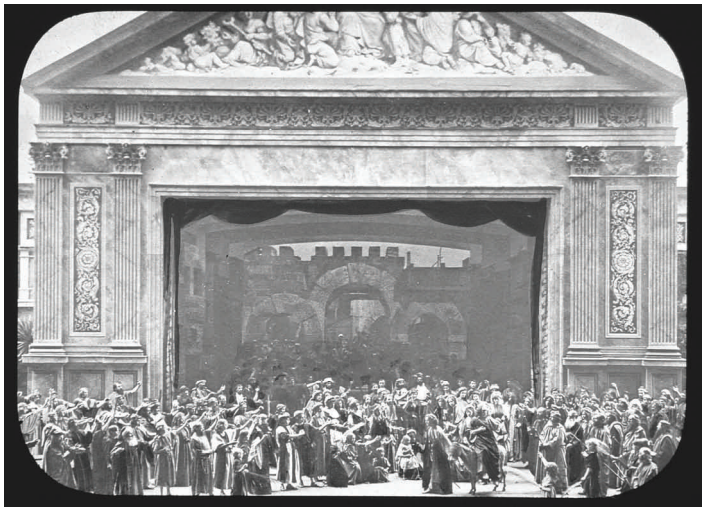
Despite these strictures, the Oberammergau Passion Play has persisted until the present day, with a few interruptions. Starting in 1680, the villagers have attempted to put on performances of the play every ten years. Because it was considered a religious observance to commemorate the village's deliverance from a deadly plague, the Oberammergau production was able to persist after most other passion plays had been banned by the Church.[2]

A major source of controversy over passion plays in general, and the Oberammergau Passion Play in particular, is the perceived anti-Semitic tone of the performances. Although nearly all the actors who have performed in the Oberammergau Passion Play have been Catholics, most of the characters they play are Jewish, including not only Jesus himself, but also the main villains of the piece: Judas, the Pharisees, the Temple priests, and those who bore false witness against Christ. Typically the condemnation of Christ has been depicted as a plot by greedy and powerful Jewish interests against a perceived threat to their power. The Romans, who actually carried out the execution, and in particular the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, have been depicted as tools of these forces, who literally washed their hands of the whole affair. Criticism of the Oberammergau Passion Play for its anti-Semitic overtones intensified in the late 19th century, when the play was discovered by travelers from other countries, especially the United States, and continued throughout the 20th century. The reputation of the Oberammergau production was not enhanced by Adolf Hitler's enthusiastic endorsement of the play in 1934, specifically because of its negative portrayal of Jews. Indeed, many of the lead actors in the 1934 production, including Alois Lang, who played Christ, were active members of the Nazi party.[3] Similar complaints of anti-Semitism have been leveled at many other live passion plays and passion play films, from Cecil B. De Mille's *King of Kings* (1927) to Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).[4]

These religious and political controversies have been discussed by many writers for over a century and are not the main focus of this article.[5] My interest is in the Oberammergau Passion Play as a social phenomenon, and the way in which various visual media, including lantern slides, brought the play to an ever-widening audience. There are a number of important links between the Oberammergau Passion Play and the culture of the magic lantern in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as the very earliest days of motion pictures. Indeed, the inhabitants Oberammergau often credited the lantern slide lectures of John L. Stoddard and Burton Holmes with turning their small village into a major tourist destination, and both men were treated as special friends by the villagers.[6]



Lantern slide of the Oberammergau Passion Play Theater in 1910. The large barn-like structure on the right provides shelter for the audience. The stage and dressing rooms are on the left, with the stage open to the elements. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.



Lantern slide of the open-air stage, with a scene showing Christ entering Jerusalem on a donkey, from the 1910 performance of the Passion Play. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

The Structure of the Oberammergau Passion Play

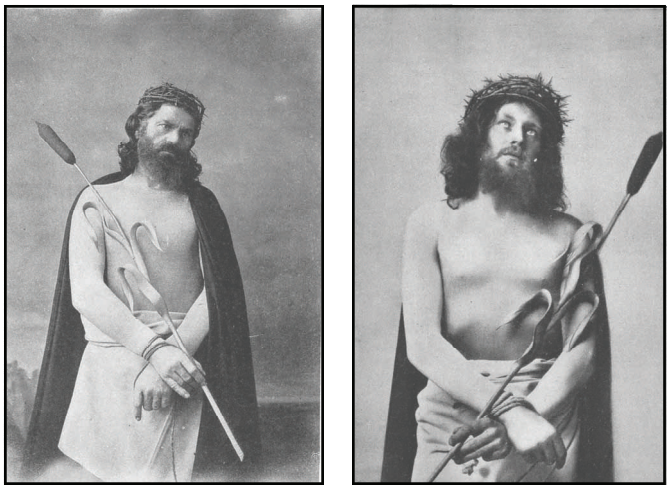
The basic structure of the Oberammergau Passion Play has not changed very much over the last several hundred years, although the text has been revised several times since the middle of the 19th century. The slides that illustrate this article and those that appear on the covers are from the 1910 performance, but the scenes depicted in these slides are nearly identical to those of earlier and later performances. By any standard, the Oberammergau Passion Play is an exceedingly long play. Generally a performance began at 8:00 AM and ended at 6:00 PM, with a two-hour lunch break to allow visitors and actors alike to refresh themselves in the local eateries (mostly run by members of the play's cast). The complete English text of the 1910 performance runs to nearly 140 closely spaced pages.[7]

The structure of the play is rather unusual, a combination of Greek drama, religious pageant, and tableaux vivant. Each act is preceded by a prologue delivered by a chorus, as in ancient Greek drama. The various acts of the play depict the final days of the life of Christ, his crucifixion, and his resurrection.

These are interspersed with a series of tableaux taken from Old Testament passages that are thought to foretell events in the life of Christ. The first tableau, for example, depicts the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, symbolizing the Fall of Man, who would later be saved by Christ's sacrifice. The lantern slide of this tableau shows Adam and Eve wrapped in animal skins, looking somewhat like 19th century depictions of early cave men.[8] This contrasts with many 19th century painted lantern slides that depicted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden without clothing. The use of animal skins was not just a concession to the modesty of the actors and the audience, or to the cool Bavarian weather—it indicated that humans already had fallen from their original perfect state and now had to labor to survive. Indeed, some of the earliest known depictions of Adam and Even show them garbed in animal skins.[9]

Tableau of Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden. Their animal-skin garments symbolize their fall from grace. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

The various scenes of the play depicting the life, death, and resurrection of Christ were carefully modeled after famous works of art. For example, the scene showing the Last Supper, which is shown on the back cover of this issue, was copied from the famous painting by Leonardo Da Vinci, while the scene Christ being taken down from the cross was modeled after another famous painting by Rubens. In contrast to the Old Testament tableaux, in which the actors remained frozen on the stage, there was considerable movement and dialogue in the scenes of the play, even while maintaining the impression that the audience was looking at copies of great works of art. Of course, lantern slides and other still photographic images of these scenes contributed to the effect—by carefully selecting particular scenes within each act of the play to be photographed, the photographers preserved the illusion of a work of art recreated by live actors.

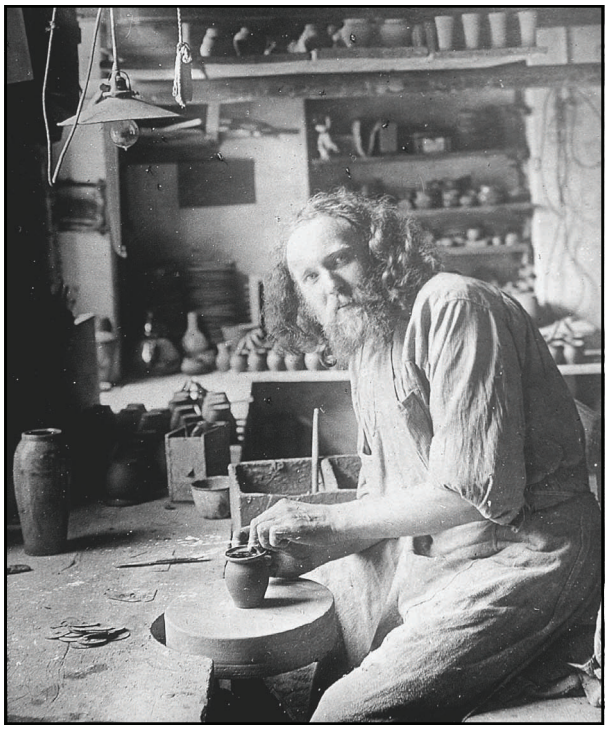


Only two men played the role of Christ in the Oberammergau Passion Play between 1870 and 1922, Joseph Meyer (left, in 1890) and Anton Lang (right, in 1900). Compare these images with that of Anton Lang in the same pose in 1910 on the back cover. From Diemer (1910)

The Actors

Throughout its history, the Oberammergau Passion Play has been performed exclusively by inhabitants of the village. The entire production is carefully controlled by a committee of senior villagers, which chooses the individuals to play each role. Several hundred people participate in each production, but of course the lead roles are greatly coveted the villagers, who use the many years between productions to hone their acting skills. Frequently the same actors had long runs playing the same character, or switched roles as they became too old for their original parts. For example, Joseph Meyer (sometimes spelled Maier or Mayr) played the role of Christ in 1870, 1880, and 1890, despite the fact that he was in his mid-50s when he finally relinquished the role to a younger actor in 1900. In that year, he switched to a new role created for him, the speaker of the prologues that introduced the play to the audience.[10]

Typically the villagers went about their normal activities for nine years between productions, but spent the better part of a year preparing for the next set of performances. For the men, this included allowing their hair and beards to grow; wigs, false beards, and makeup were not permitted. Most of the men cut their hair to normal length once the performance season ended. Anton Lang, who played Christ in the productions of 1900, 1910, and 1922, kept his hair permanently long, carefully maintaining a Christ-like appearance even while going about his normal work of making pottery. Many who saw Lang as Jesus commented on how well his appearance suited the role. Of course, we have no idea what Jesus actually looked like, although it is reasonable to assume he would not have resembled a fair-haired, blue-eyed Bavarian potter.



Lantern slide of Anton Lang in his pottery studio, 1910. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

Photographs of Lang, either in his role as Jesus, or in real life, were widely circulated through the media of lantern slide lectures, magazine and newspaper articles, and picture postcards, and his image became well known to people around the world who had never been anywhere near Oberammergau. Indeed, these became such iconic images that many viewers probably imagined they actually were looking at an image of Christ himself.[12] In 1910, the Rev. William H. Crawford wrote, "if any man now living has face and form for the part, Anton Lang would seem to be the man. As he goes about his home he actually looks more like the Christ than like an ordinary man...He has long waving hair of light brown parted from a fair brow, finely chiseled features, a delicate, sensitive mouth, and deep blue eyes of passionate tenderness. If Raphael could have seen Anton Lang, he would certainly have chosen him for a model."[13] Apparently some people thought he should behave as a Christ-like figure as well. Lang reported in his autobiography that when he was to be married, a French marquise wrote to protest that he should not marry, because Christ was not married. He also related stories of audience members asking him to bless their children after a performance. These events, he said, were examples of "how people are apt to get things mixed up."[14]

One unusual feature of the casting of the play is that the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, traditionally was given to a relatively young, unmarried woman. Because the same man sometimes played the role of Jesus for 20 years, this could result in the actress playing Mary not only being considerably younger than the actor playing her son, but in fact, younger than Jesus was at his death. In 1900, when Anton Lang played the role of Jesus for the first time at age 25, his mother was played by 18-year-old Anna Flunger.[15] In 1910, the 35-year-old Lang was a more appropriate age to play Jesus at the end of his life. The role of Mary was played by Ottilie Zwink, the 30-year-old daughter of Johann Zwink, who was memorable in his role as Judas.[16] Participation in the play often was a family affair—there were many different Langs, Mayrs, and Zwinks involved with the play over the years. Anton Lang's autobiography includes a photograph of himself with five of his children, all costumed for parts in the play.[17]

Anton Lang, age 25, in the role of Jesus, with Anna Flunger, age 18, as his mother. From the 1900 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Photo by Leo Schweyer. From Diemer (1910).

The Myths of Oberammergau

Public interest in the Oberammergau Passion Play always has been accompanied by an unusual degree of interest in the village itself and the lives of its inhabitants. Invariably 19th century travel accounts described the appearance of the village in

some detail and often provided character sketches of the principal actors in the play. This also was true of lantern slide lectures on the Passion Play, whether given by professional lecturers like John L. Stoddard and Burton Holmes, or by amateur lecturers or ministers who may or may not have actually visited the village. Most lantern slide sets, including the one I have from 1910, included scenes of the village, some of the principal houses, the parish church, and the Passion Play Theater.

Outside visitors to Oberammergau first began arriving in significant numbers at about the time of the 1850 performance of the play. At that time, the village was remote and difficult to reach over bad roads. Travelers from Britain and the United States who arrived in the village often reacted as if they had come upon a Tolkienesque Shire full of Hobbits. Invariably their accounts emphasized the isolated nature of the village and usually described the villagers as "peasants" living a simpler and more wholesome life than that of most modern Europeans.[18] The piety and integrity of the Oberammergau villagers often was contrasted with the greed and materialism of modern European and American societies. As late as 1922, one writer described "the peasants' purity of heart and simple goodness that are everywhere reflected in their faces," and referred to Oberammergau as "one of the few spots in all the world where faith and idealism have successfully withstood materialism and commercial greed."[19]

Lantern slide of the children of Oberammergau, costumed for their roles in the Passion Play of 1910. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

All of this was a bit of a myth, of course—Oberammergau probably was not much more isolated or lost in time than many other small villages in the Bavarian Alps in an era where roads were almost universally terrible and the railroads had not yet reached the smaller towns (direct rail connections to Oberammergau did not arrive until 1900). Even today, some villages in this region are quite isolated—a recent article in the *New York Times* reported on one village in the Austrian Tyrol that still, in 2007, has no direct road connection to the outside world. Nevertheless, certainly by 1880, tourists were arriving in Oberammergau in large numbers, and this turned into a flood by the end of the century, as roads were improved and trains eventually reached the village itself. Enterprising travel agents placed advertisements in Christian magazines for package tours to the Holy Land, with side trips to the Oberammergau Passion Play. These packages included shipboard lectures, undoubtedly illustrated with lantern slides, of the principal sights to be visited.

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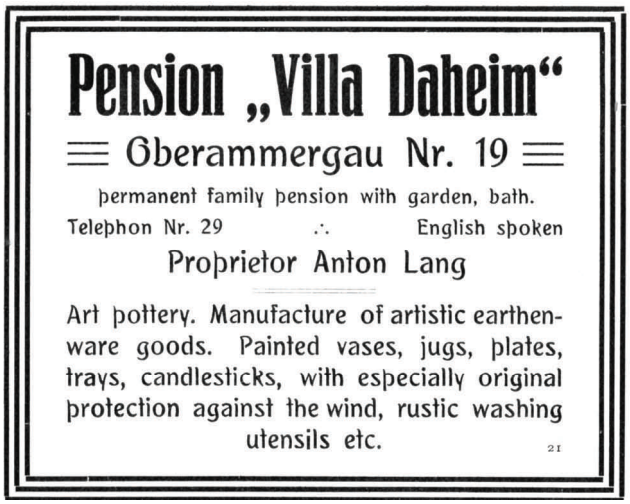
Advertisement for a travel package to the Holy Land, with a side trip to the Oberammergau Passion Play. Shipboard lectures were included, undoubtedly illustrated with lantern slides. From *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, February 24, 1910.

By the late 19th century, Oberammergau more closely resembled an artists' colony than a peasant village. Oberammergau had long been known for its exquisite wood carvings, and the village had well-equipped school to teach younger villagers the art of wood carving. Of the 63 major players listed by name for the 1910 performance, 30 were described as either carvers or sculptors, while Anton Lang was a potter by trade.[20] The crafts created in Oberammergau were widely marketed throughout Europe and even Australia and the United States, often by villagers who traveled to distant cities to serve as sales agents. The sale of crafts, both in the village and elsewhere, provided a steady income for the villagers.[21]

Terms such as "untutored peasants" or "simple peasants" that often were applied to the villagers of Oberammergau are particularly inappropriate in the case of Anton Lang, who spoke

and wrote English fluently, traveled widely in England, Italy, Egypt, and the Holy Land, and had many English and American friends. Images of Lang in the form of lantern slides, magazine photos, and postcards circulated around the world, and he became an international celebrity. In addition to acting in the Passion Play, he also ran a boarding house for visitors, and his guestbook included the names of famous people from around the world—bishops, actors, businessmen, writers, and others. The owner of the Wedgwood Pottery factory in England came to stay, as did F. D. Waterman, manufacturer of fountain pens, along with a parade of other dignitaries. Regular guests included the two most famous lantern slide lecturers if the period, John L. Stoddard and Burton Holmes .[22]


Pension „Villa Daheim"

Oberammergau Nr. 19

permanent family pension with garden, bath.

Telephon Nr. 29 ∴ English spoken

Proprietor Anton Lang

Art pottery. Manufacture of artistic earthenware goods. Painted vases, jugs, plates, trays, candlesticks, with especially original protection against the wind, rustic washing utensils etc.

21

Advertisement for Anton Lang's guesthouse and pottery studio, from a 1910 guidebook to the Oberammergau Passion Play. From Schroeder (1910).

When foreign tourists first began to arrive in the 1850s, accommodations in the village were scarce, and visitors typically lodged at the homes of some of the major actors in the play. Visitors often referred to their hosts by the names of their characters. One writer in 1880 described his difficulty in finding lodging as follows: "I sought the Burgomaster, and in him I found a—donkey. Armed with a brief authority, he railed and ranted at the pressure put upon him to find shelter for the incoming pilgrims, as though rehearsing for the part of *Caiaphas*, which, to do him justice, he acted 'excellent well' upon the following day.... I repaired to the house of *Herod*, but he wouldn't listen to me. *St. Peter* denied me admittance. *Judas* refused my pieces of silver. *Pilate* washed his hands of me. *Joseph of Arimathea* was three deep; and after a weary searching, I found sanctuary in the house of the worthy Frau Krach, to whose daughter Anastasia was cast the part of the *Virgin Mother* in the coming play."[23]

As tourism flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Passion Play became the economic engine for the village and the whole region. By some estimates, a quarter of a million tourists visited Oberammergau in 1910.[24] To accommodate the ever-growing crowds of visitors, many new lodging houses, hotels, and restaurants were built, often run by the principal actors in the Passion Play. Anton Lang, for example, advertised both his boarding house and his pottery shop in a 1910 guidebook to the Passion Play.[25] Certainly by this time, the myth of Oberammergau as an isolated peasant village had been largely dispelled, giving way to the reality of a busy tourist town. Perhaps presaging the American obsession with the automobile, *Town and Country* magazine reported in 1910 that, "as a special concession to Americans, motor cars will be permitted in Oberammergau during the season of the Passion Play... the Passion Play Committee has built a fireproof garage with accommodations for two hundred cars and their attendants."[26]

Lantern slide of Oberammergau, showing large houses used as guesthouses for the ever-increasing crowds of visitors. Lantern slide by the Victor Animatograph Company.

The Photographs

When foreign travelers first began to discover Oberammergau around 1850, magazine and newspaper articles about the Passion Play usually were illustrated with engravings, often from sketches or photographs taken at the scene. Beginning in the 1880s, photographs of Oberammergau and its play were widely disseminated in magazines, newspapers, lantern slides, and later, postcards. The villagers always maintained tight control over the production and distribution of these photographs. Private photographers were not allowed to photograph the performances or the actors in costume, although they could take pictures of the village and its surroundings. All photographs of the play itself were distributed through an official photographer chosen by the villagers. In 1900, the official photographer was Leo Schweyer, while in 1910, all photographs were taken by F. Bruckmann of Munich. These official photographs were

Photographic print of Jesus taking leave of his mother at Bethany, from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Official photographs like this one were sold as souvenirs and used for the production of lantern slides, postcards, and illustrations in books, magazines, and newspapers. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Wells collection.

sold as large format souvenir prints and also were used in magazines, newspapers, guidebooks, postcards, and lantern slides issued by many different distributors. Bruckmann published his own guidebook to Oberammergau, and the Bruckmann publishing company still produces guides to the village and its surroundings today.[27] The tight control over photography exercised by the Oberammergau villagers meant that precisely the same photographs appeared in many venues, including lantern slides, black and white and colored postcards, books, and magazines, no doubt contributing to the iconic nature of these images.[28]

John L. Stoddard Goes to Oberammergau

From 1880 to 1910, no visual medium was more important than lantern slide lectures in bringing the Oberammergau Passion play to a mass audience, and no lecturer had a greater impact than John L. Stoddard. Stoddard had only recently begun his career as a professional travel lecturer when he attended his first performance of the Passion Play in 1880. He was immediately enthralled by the quaint Bavarian village and its inhabitants, as well as the beauty and pageantry of the play. By the end of the year, he was presenting an illustrated lecture on the Passion Play to large audiences in major cities like New York. His Passion Play lecture became a regular staple on his lecture tours, especially during the Easter season, and soon became one of his most popular subjects. His lecture on the 1880 performance was published in *Red-Letter Days Abroad* in 1884. This book was published before the widespread use of halftone photographs in books, so the illustrations were in the form of engravings done from photographs, many of which were cropped to resemble the shape of matted lantern slides.[29] Stoddard attended the play again in 1890, and indeed every performance until 1922. He revised his lecture to incorporate his 1890 visit, on which he was accompanied by his own photographer (Stoddard never took his own photographs). His travels in Oberammergau and his description of the 1890 performance formed the basis for his published lecture on the Passion Play, which was illustrated with photographs, presumably those used in his lantern slide lectures.[30] Like all other lantern slide lecturers, he had to rely on commercially purchased slides to illustrate the play itself, so the images in his published lectures are identical to those that appeared in many other books and magazines.

Illustration of the remorse of Judas from the 1880 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play, from a lantern slide. From John L. Stoddard, *Red Letter Days Abroad* (1884). The publication of this book preceded the widespread use of halftone illustrations, so Stoddard had to use engravings to represent his lantern slides.

Stoddard's lectures undoubtedly induced many in his audiences to make their own trips to Oberammergau, and they reached many others who never traveled to Europe themselves. Stoddard routinely lectured to sold-out crowds in the largest theaters in New York and other cities, and by one estimate, a half million people attended his Oberammergau lectures, about double the number of people who attended performances of the play every ten years. According to his biographer, D. Crane Taylor, his Oberammergau lecture "produced in some cases an overpowering emotional effect."[31] A highlight of the lecture was the use of dissolving views to produce the illusion of motion during Christ's last moments on the cross, which his biographer inaccurately described as "the first motion picture."[32] His somewhat overblown description of this part of the lecture and its effect on the audience is as follows:

As Stoddard worked toward this climax the screen held a realistic picture in colors of Christ upon the cross, his upright head surmounted by a crown of thorns. When Stoddard slowly and quietly pronounced the words "The head drooped wearily upon the breast" his audience actually saw Christ's head drop forward. No conspiracy of ear and eye had ever before produced realism comparable to this. The effect upon the audience was tremendous. The silence of the darkened house was broken by hundreds of sobs, some hysterical. Ushers moved forward in the aisles and at every performance carried out from five to twelve prostrate women.... This lecture was repeated over two hundred times, and whenever it was given, approximately the same number of women succumed.[33]

Taylor went on to state that "This dramatic performance had one unexpected result. Through it scores of people came to believe in Christ and the Father for the first time, and hundreds found their drooping faith revived."[34] Oddly enough, attending the Oberammergau Passion Play did not seem to have the same effect on Stoddard himself, who throughout his career as a lecturer was a self-professed agnostic. Only late in life, many years after retiring from the lecture circuit, did Stoddard finally convert to Catholicism. His book on his conversion from agnosticism to Catholicism makes no mention of his many trips to Oberammergau or any effect the play might have had on his religious views.[35]

Lantern slide of the kiss of Judas, from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

Burton Holmes Takes Over

In 1897, John L. Stoddard abruptly retired from the lecture circuit without any prior announcement and moved to Europe, where he spent the rest of his life, never to give another lantern slide performance. He recommended to his managers that his replacement on the travelogue lecture circuit should be Burton Holmes, a younger man just beginning his long career. Holmes had actually first met Stoddard when he found himself sitting next to the famous lecturer at the 1890 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play, and the two men became close friends. Holmes returned to Oberammergau every ten years for new performances and generally made a point of visiting Stoddard while he has in Europe. He soon developed his own lantern slide lecture on Oberammergau and the Passion Play, which later appeared in the 5th volume of his published lectures.

Left: Descent from the Cross by Rubens. From *John L. Stoddard's Lectures*, vol. 4. **Center:** Scene of Descent from the Cross, from the 1900 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Photo by Leo Schweyer. This same image appeared in Burton Holmes' lecture on Oberammergau. **Right:** Scene of Descent from the Cross, from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. This image appears in colored form in my set of lantern slides. Center and right photos from Diemer (1910).

Although his published lecture is entitled "Oberammergau in 1900," the 1918 edition of his lectures that I have includes a mixture of Leo Schweyer's photographs of the 1900 performance and Bruckmann's photographs of the 1910 performance. For example, the image of Anton Lang with a crown of thorns and a scepter of cattails, shown as a lantern slide from the 1910 performance on the back cover of this issue, appears in Holmes' published lecture. His image of Christ's descent from the cross, modeled after the painting by Rubens, was taken ten years earlier and therefore shows a younger Anton Lang. Indeed, Holmes did give lectures entitled "Oberammergau and the Passion Play in 1910," so despite its title, the published lecture probably represents a composite picture of several different visits.[36]

In contrast to Stoddard, Holmes was an accomplished photographer and generally illustrated his lectures with his own photographs or those he had commissioned, except when this was impossible, as with the pictures of the Passion Play performance. Indeed, Holmes focused much of his lecture on the village of Oberammergau itself, and his own photographs of the town and its inhabitants outnumber the images of the Passion Play in his published lecture. By 1900, Holmes also was taking motion pictures of events in the village, such as staged drills by the fire brigade, and his subsequent travel lectures combined lantern slides with short films. Because Holmes was a photographer before he was a lecturer, whereas Stoddard began giving lectures before using slides, their styles of presentation, at least as represented in their published lectures, was quite different. Stoddard was always credited with an ability to sway his audiences with his spoken words, whereas Holmes was a superior pictorial story-teller. In his Oberammergau lecture, Holmes included many different scenes of village life, crowds lining up to buy tickets to the play, groups of tourists assembled around a fountain in the village center, and other images that gave the reader, and presumably his listeners, the impression of actually walking through this quaint Bavarian village. Stoddard's approach was more scholarly, including not only photos of the village and the play performance, but also photographic reproductions of great works of art that served as models for the staging of the Passion Play.[37]

Mass Production of Lantern Slides: Everyone His Own Expert

Between 1890 and 1910, the mass production of photographic lantern slides for the commercial market was in full swing, with hundreds of thousands of slides of religious subjects being offered by distributors throughout the United States and Europe. Many of these distributors offered slides of the Oberammergau Passion Play, and because of the restrictions on photography imposed by the villagers, these slides offered the very same images from official photographs that were available to professional lecturers like Stoddard and Holmes. Good quality lantern slides, especially those that were hand-colored, were relatively expensive. For example, a 1901 T. H. McAllister catalog listed

Above: Fire brigade staging a drill in Oberammergau for Burton Holmes' camera. **Right:** Burton Holmes taking photographs in Oberammergau. Holmes is the man in the hat behind the camera at the right of the photograph. From Burton Holmes Travelogues, vol. 5.

50 colored views of the 1900 Oberammergau Passion Play, with a lecture, for $50, with additional slides available for $1.10 each. Not very expensive by today's standards, to be sure, but the same catalog listed top-quality dissolving view double lanterns for about $200, and serviceable single lanterns for well under $100. A post-1910 catalog from George W. Bond & Co. of Chicago listed colored slides and printed lectures from both the 1900 and 1910 performances, with the latter offered at $.50 each.[38]

The widespread availability of commercially produced lantern slides and pre-packaged lectures meant that virtually anyone could give a lecture on the Passion Play, even without having visited Oberammergau. Such lantern lectures, often delivered by ministers, soon became commonplace in many churches. As early as 1880, the *Christian Union* reported that "Several Ritualistic clergymen in England, having in mind the Oberammergau Passion Play, have determined to represent the Passion on the white sheet. The chancel gives them the very arrangement they would desire. They can place the magic lantern near the altar and erect a sheet where the rood screen might be. The choir, retaining their places, sing hymns during the performance. The priest gives an explanation from the pulpit, like a reader at the Polytechnic. This is an entirely new phase of 'Church and Stage.'[39]

From 1890 to 1910, dozens of announcements of similar lectures on the Oberammergau Passion Play appeared in religious periodicals. A few examples will give the flavor of these presentations:

"Christmas night Bro. George Penniman gave a fine stereopticon entertainment in which were many selected views from his lecture on The Passion Play."[40]

"Another most interesting lecture was that by the Rev. E. S. Osborn, D.D., of New York Conference on 'Personal Impressions of the Oberammergau Passion Play.' This lecture was illustrated by stereopticon views of photographs of the town, the leading characters, and the principal tableaux, and seemed to produce a deep and solemn religious impression on the vast assemblage."[41]

"The Canisteo church had Mr. Miller himself, with a vivid word picture of what he saw, re-enforced by a fine stereopticon illustration of the trip. The stereopticon is by no means a new thing in this community. But this particular kind was new in its vivid picturing of how two men went to the Passion Play at Oberammergau… We fully commend this entertainment to other churches."[42]

YOU will very likely wish to lecture upon the Passion Play at home during the next few months. Full particulars about the hire and purchase of Lantern Slides illustrating the Play (i. e. slides of Players, Scenes, and Tableaux) and views in the Village will be sent you on application to Stead's Publishing House, Lantern Department, Bank Buildings, Kingsway, London.

Advertisement for lantern slides of the Passion Play, from a 1910 guidebook.

Lantern slide of The Pietà, from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Photo by F. Bruckmann, Munich. Lantern slide by T. H. McAllister, New York.

"On Monday and Tuesday evening, the Rev. Creighton R. Storey, pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church of this city, delivered two lectures on the Passion Play of Oberammergau, which he was fortunate enough to witness at its last presentation in 1900. He had brought with him a great many very beautiful slides which were thrown upon the canvas through the very fine instrument in the hands of Mr. W. F. Hirsch... The songs and scriptural reading were all thrown upon the screen, and in the hands of Mr. Storey the meetings became very helpful and inspiring from a devotional standpoint as well as exceedingly interesting from an artistic and educational standpoint."[43]

Not every writer in these religious periodicals approved of lantern slides of the Passion Play being shown in church. In 1891, the editor of the *Christian Advocate* responded to a query about the use of magic lanterns this way:

Q. Is the Passion Play, given as an entertainment by means of the magic lantern, to be desired in our churches?

A. Whatever may be said of the play as performed by the peasant people in the highlands of Bavaria, the exhibition of it in cold blood, by means of a magic lantern, with a charge at the door, does not commend itself as desirable to be admitted into the church.[44]

In 1905, a writer in *The Independent* decried the use of spectacles to draw large crowds into churches: "There are also varied performances given with the aid of a magic lantern, one of which is described as 'intensely dramatic and interesting' and another as 'a unique and delightful entertainment,' while still a third has 'an attractive program with unique features.' Favorite among these during the past year has been the reproduction of scenes from the Passion Play..." This anonymous writer summed up his opposition to such entertainments by saying, "A crowd cannot be collected by a mountebank's tricks and then appealed to with the solemn truth of God."[45]

The Passion Play in America

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Americans not only comprised the single largest contingent of foreign tourists visiting Oberammergau, but also were the largest audiences for the travel lectures of Stoddard and Holmes, and very likely, the largest market for photographically illustrated books, magazine articles, and postcards of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Yet the American attitude toward passion plays has always been somewhat schizophrenic. While Stoddard and Holmes regularly filled the largest theaters and halls with crowds eager to see lantern slides of the Oberammergau Passion Play, various attempts to put on live passion play performances in the United States met with almost universal disapproval.

The most famous of these attempts was a passion play produced by Salmi Morse, an unusual character who was born into a Jewish family and later converted to Catholicism. In 1879, Morse opened an elaborately staged production of a passion play in San Francisco, with the well-known actor James O'Neill (the father of playwright Eugene O'Neill) in the role of Christ. Although initially supported by representatives of the Catholic Church, the play evoked a storm of protest, mostly from more conservative Protestant religious leaders, who objected to the impersonation of Christ by a live actor. In its initial two-week run, scenes of the crucifixion and the resurrection were omitted from the performance because of anticipated religious objections. When the play reopened for the Easter season, the scene of the crucifixion was again omitted, but scenes of Christ's descent from the cross and The Ascension were included. The next day, O'Neill was arrested and fined for impersonating Christ, and the play closed after a few days. An attempt to revive Morse's play in New York in 1880 never got off the ground in the face of relentless protests by religious leaders and even theater critics and editors, and another attempt in 1883 failed as well. Ironically, while Morse's 1880 New York production was being blocked, Stoddard presented his first lecture on the Oberammergau Passion Play to a sold-out audience in a New York theater, with many clergy in attendance. There is no evidence that this lecture, or any of the subsequent lectures by Stoddard and Holmes, ever elicited the sort of opposition generated by the Morse passion play.[46]

Eventually this resistance to live passion play performances diminished, possibly because of the growing familiarity of the American public with the Oberammergau Passion Play, due in large part to the lantern slide lectures of Stoddard and Holmes, and later, to the popularity of passion play films,

which are described below. Soon all sorts of unusual manifestations of the passion play phenomenon appeared. As early as 1901, the Jesuits of Santa Clara College in California began performing a passion play, and in the same year, the Skwa Indians of British Columbia produced a passion play with tribal performers.[47] By the 1930s, passion plays were being performed by the Mormons and other religious groups, and a number of large-scale passion play pageants became major tourist attractions. The best know of these, which still exist today, are the Black Hills Passion Play in Spearfish, South Dakota, and the Great Passion Play of Eureka Springs, Arkansas. These efforts are largely the province of evangelical protestant churches, not the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, all of these productions are at least indirectly derived from the Oberammergau Passion Play, although the Black Hills Passion Play has been the one most directly connected with that production. It was first performed by a largely German group of actors in the 1930s, with Josef Meier in the role of Christ (not related to the Joseph Meyer who played the role at Oberammergau). Early images of the Black Hills Passion Play make clear that the staging of the play owed a great deal to the iconic images of the Oberammergau production made famous through lantern slides, books, magazines, and postcards.[48]

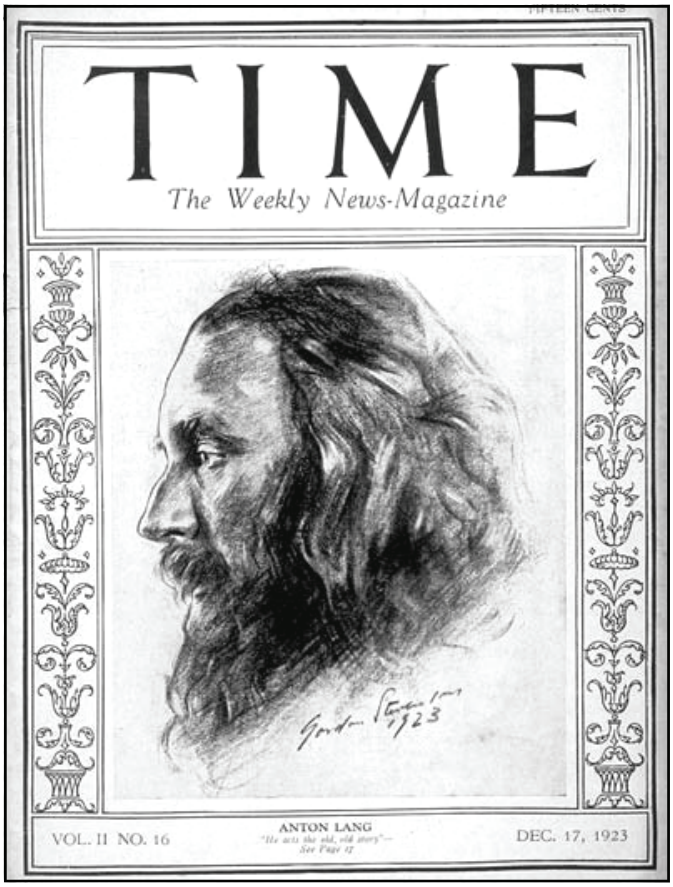
Postcard of the Black Hills Passion Play, date unknown. The staging of the scene at upper right of the Descent from the Cross clearly was influenced by images of this same scene from the Oberammergau play (see page 11).

Jesus Goes to the Movies

In addition to live passion play performances, another legacy of the Oberammergau Passion Play, with a connection to early lantern slide lectures, is the appearance of numerous passion play films at the end of the 19th century. Indeed, these films played an important role in the early history of the cinema, because they were among the very first cohesive narrative motion pictures. Until the appearance of passion play films in 1898, motion pictures consisted mostly of short clips of events like trains moving along tracks, horse-drawn fire engines racing to fires, and boxing matches. Passion play films showed the potential for cinema to actually tell a story in pictures. There were many such films produced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most of them now lost. Of most interest in the context of this article is *The Passion Play of Oberammergau*, produced in 1898. After its initial showing at the Eden Musee in New York, an institution that combined waxworks with lantern slide shows, band concerts, and other attractions, this film circulated widely throughout the country for many years. The producers of the film initially claimed to have actually filmed a performance in Oberammergau, but the press soon revealed that the whole production had been shot with American actors on the roof of the Grand Central Palace in New York. Early presentations of *The Passion Play of Oberammergau* were not in the form of an extended feature film that we would see in a movie theater today. Instead, short film clips often were interspersed with lantern slides, sometimes accompanied by a lecturer's narration and appropriate religious music. In contrast to the vociferous protests engendered by live passion play performances, passion play films won the early endorsement of many clergymen, and indeed, *The Passion Play of Oberammergau* and similar films became a staple of the church lecture circuit, and often was shown in a combined program with lantern slides.[49] From rather simple beginning, the genre of the passion play film eventually evolved into hundreds of full-length feature films, both silent and sound, on the life and death of Jesus.[50]

Epilogue: Anton Lang Goes to America

The 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play marked the end of a long run of spectacular performances put on by the villagers in the last half of the 19th and first years of the 20th century. It also marked the end of the romanticized view of Oberammergau as an isolated mountain village, cut off from the affairs of a larger world. Within a few years, World War I intervened, with devastating consequences for Oberammergau, as for most other villages, towns, and cities in western Europe. Many of Oberammergau's men were killed in the years of senseless trench warfare on the Western Front. Some newspapers in the United States even reported that Anton Lang had been killed in action, although he was safely at home in Oberammergau. In the aftermath of the war, with the German economy in ruins and German currency nearly worthless, the village was nearly bankrupt. The performance of the Passion Play that normally would have occurred in 1920 was delayed until 1922, and putting on the performance to diminished crowds of foreign tourists nearly drained the town's bank accounts. To remedy the situation, Anton Lang called upon his many wealthy American friends to sponsor a fundraising tour of the United States in 1923, on which he was accompanied by some of the principal cast members. Despite Germany having been at war with the United States only a few years earlier, the delegation received a very friendly



Anton Lang on the cover of *Time*, December 17, 1923.

reception throughout the country, being greeted by mayors of major cities and other dignitaries. Anton Lang appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine in an issue that covered the visit.[51] The tour was organized around a traveling exhibition of wood carvings, pottery, and other crafts offered for sale. An elaborate catalog was printed for the craft exhibition, complete with letters and testimonials from famous American sponsors. The sponsors of the tour included a who's who of the rich and famous—Gov. Al Smith of New York, Walter Hines Page, W. A. Harriman, Charles L. Tiffany, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Frank Waterman, Maxfield Parrish, and Burton Holmes, among many others. Burton Holmes even took out a paid advertisement in the catalog, with a personal greeting to the Oberammergau delegation: "A hearty welcome to you all—and may our welcome be like yours to us—for you are past masters in the art of welcoming strangers to the world-famous village where you dwell. We came to you as strangers, but it is not as strangers that you come to us. It is as well remembered and beloved friends to whom we owe far more than we can ever pay."[52]

Notes and References

1. Dozens of books have been written about the Oberammergau Passion Play. Background information on the history and structure of the play came from: James Shapiro, *Oberammergau: The Troubling Story of the World's Most Famous Passion Play* (Pantheon Books, New York, 2000); Hermine Diemer, *Oberammergau and its Passion Play* (Carl Aug. Seyfried & Co., Munich, 1910); *The Passion Play at Ober Ammergau 1910. The Complete Official German Text of the Play with English Translation Printed Side by Side* (Stead's Publishing House, London, 1910); Joseph Schroeder, *Oberammergau and its Passion Play* (Heinrich Korff, Munich, 1910); many contemporary magazine articles too numerous to list here also were consulted.

2. Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, pp. 65-73.

3. Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, p. 149.

4. Mel Gibson's film generated an enormous scholarly literature on the history of Christian passion films and controversies over their anti-Semitic tone. Recent useful sources are: Adele Reinhartz, 2004, Passion-ate moments in the Jesus film genre, *Journal of Religion and Society*, suppl. Series 1:1-10; Yael Ohad-Karny, 2005, "Anticipating" Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*: the controversy over Cecil B. De Mille's *The King of Kings*, *Jewish History*, 19: 189-210; Gordon R. Mork, 2005, Dramatizing the Passion: From Oberammergau to Gibson, *Shofar: An International Journal of Jewish Studies* 23:85-92.

5. Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, gives a very balanced account of these controversies from the perspective of a theater historian who also is Jewish.

6. D. Crane Taylor, *John L. Stoddard* (J. P. Kennedy and Sons, New York, 1935), pp. 138-139; *John L. Stoddard's Lectures*, vol. 4 (Balch Brothers, Boston, 1897), pp. 230-335; *Burton Holmes Travelogues*, vol. 5 (The Travelogue Bureau, Chicago and New York, 1918), pp. 115-224.

7. *The Passion Play at Ober Ammergau 1910* (see note 1).

8. For a discussion of the similarities in 19th century depictions of cavemen and Adam and Eve, see Stephanie Moser, *Ancestral Images: The Iconography of Human Origins* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1998), pp. 107-121.

9. Moser, *Ancestral Images*, p. 41.

10. Diemer, *Oberammergau and its Passion Play*; *The Passion Play at Ober Ammergau 1910*, pp. 31-37.

11. For a detailed scholarly discussion of the visual culture of religious images in 19th century America, see David Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1999), especially Chapter 8, "The Devotional Likeness of Christ", pp. 265-304.

12. Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures*, pp. 292-304.

13. Rev. William H. Crawford, Oberammergau and its Holy Play, *Zion's Herald*, July 13, 1910, p. 873.

14. Anton Lang, *Reminiscences* (Knorr & Hirth, Munich, n.d.), p. 40.

15. Ida Shaper Hoxie, The Passion Play this year, *The Ladies Home Journal*, June 1900, pp. 7-8.

16. Louise Parker Richards, Life stories of the Oberammergau players, *McClure's Magazine*, August 1910, pp. 388-399.

17. Lang, *Reminiscences*, p. 96.

18. Uwe Boker, 1984, Oberammergau: A minor American myth, *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 19:33-42; Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, pp. 101-136. A discussion of 19th century American magazine writing about Oberammergau is given in Claire Sponsler, *Ritual Imports: Performing Medieval Drama in America* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2004), Chapter 5, "America's Passion Plays," pp. 126-134. Accounts of British travelers, especially clergymen, are discussed in Richard Foulkes, *Church and Stage in Victorian England* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), Chapter 7, "From Passion Play to Pantomime", pp. 108-117.

19. Winold Reiss, Oberammergau players, *The Century Magazine*, September 1922, p. 737.

20. Schroeder, *Oberammergau and its Passion Play* (see note 1).

21. Shapiro, *Oberammergau*, pp. 120-123.

22. Lang, *Reminiscences*, pp. 145-146.

23. N. Robinson, The Passion Play in 1880, *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, August 1880, p. 3.

24. *The Passion Play at Ober Ammergau 1910.*

25. Schroeder, *Oberammergau and its Passion Play*, p. 27.

26. Notes of Oberammergau, *Town and Country*, March 26, 1910, p. 42.

27. Diemer, *Oberammergau and its Passion Play,* has large format reproductions of the photographs from both of these photographers from the 1900 and 1910 performances.
28. Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures* (see note 11), pp. 301-304, has a detailed discussion of the importance of mass production, particularly of halftone photographic images, in the dissemination of religious images in the United States.

29. John L. Stoddard, *Red-Letter Days Abroad* (James R. Osgood & Co., Boston, 1884), pp. 61-101.

30. *John L. Stoddard's Lectures*, vol. 4, pp. 230-335. For a detailed analysis of Stoddard's published Oberammergau lecture and a comparison with his account in *Red-Letter Days Abroad*, see Ann Vollmann Bible, 1999, John L. Stoddard: Distinguished lecturer and traveler. A case study of the Oberammergau Passion Play published lecture, *Chicago Art Journal* 9:22-45.

31. Taylor, *Stoddard*, p. 139.

32. Taylor, *Stoddard*, p. 141.

33. Taylor, *Stoddard*, p. 140.

34. Taylor, *Stoddard*, p. 141.

35. John L. Stoddard, *Rebuilding a Lost Faith* (P. J. Kennedy & Sons, New York, 1925).

36. *Burton Holmes Travelogues*, vol. 5 , pp. 115-224.

37. For comparisons of Stoddard and Holmes as lecturers, see: X. Theodore Barber, 1993, The roots of travel cinema: John L. Stoddard, E. Burton Holmes and the nineteenth-century illustrated travel lecture, *Film History* 5:68-84; Charles Musser, 1993, Passions and the passion play: theatre, film and religion in America, 1880-1900, *Film History* 5:419-456 (republished without the interesting illustrations in Francis G. Couvares, ed., *Movie Censorship and American Culture*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C., 1996); Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990); Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2004), Chap. 4, "Lecture Logic," pp. 55-72. Altman uses the lectures on the Oberammergau Passion Play to compare the lecturing styles of Stoddard and Holmes.

38. *Catalogue of Stereopticons, Dissolving View Apparatus, and Magic Lanterns With Extensive Lists of Views of all Subjects of Popular Interest* (T. H. McAllister, New York, 1901); *Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue and Price List of Stereopticon Slides for Churches, Schools and General Use* (Geo. W. Bond & Co., Chicago, n.d.). The Bond catalog contains many testimonial letters from satisfied customers dated 1910, so the catalog probably was published shortly thereafter.

39. *Christian Union*, November 10, 1880.

40. *Zion's Herald*, January 13, 1892, p.16.

41. *Christian Advocate*, August 4, 1892, p. 31.

42. *New York Evangelist*, March 14, 1901, p. 11.

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44. *Christian Advocate*, November 9, 1899, p. 45.

45. *The Independent*, January 26, 1905.

46. Doris M. Alexander, 1959, The Passion Play in America, *American Quarterly* 11:350-371; Sponsler, *Ritual Imports* (see note 18), pp. 134-142; Musser, Passions and the passion play (see note 37), pp. 422-427.

47. Sponsler, *Ritual Imports*, pp. 123.

48. For a description of the Black Hills Passion Play, see: Sponsler, *Ritual Imports*, pp. 142-155; Dorothy Chansky, 2006, North American Passion Plays, *TDR: The Drama Review* 50:120-145.

49. The best historical treatment of early Passion Play films is Musser, Passions and the passion play (see note 37); see also Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, pp. 208-221.

50. W. Barnes Tatum, *Jesus at the Movies: A Guide to the First Hundred Years* (Polebridge Press, Santa Rosa, California, revised and expanded edition, 2004).

51. Christus, Petrus, Judas from Ober-Ammergau: They come with carving, pottery, paintings, *Time*, December 17, 1923.

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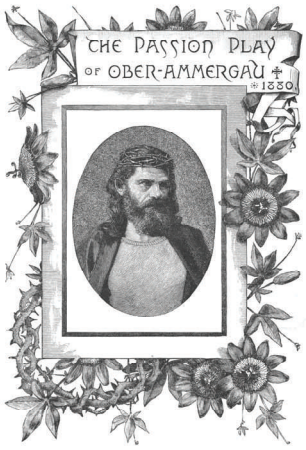

From John L. Stoddard, *Red-Letter Days Abroad* (1884)

Ghosts in Relief:
Stereoscopic Projection, Magic Lanterns, and the Movies

Ray Zone
1945 Hillhurst Ave. #4
Los Angeles, CA 90027
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In 1798, a Belgian optician named Etienne Gaspard, under the stage name "Robertson," thrilled the citizens of Paris with magic lantern projections on smoke with his Phantasmagoria illusions presented in an abandoned chapel of the Capuchin convent near Place Vendome. Undulating smoke reflecting the projected images undoubtedly created a three-dimensional effect of movement in a real-world environment. Erik Barnouw has described the effect of Robertson's projection on smoke from burning coals: "Then, onto the smoke arising from the braziers, images were projected from concealed magic lanterns. They included human forms and unearthly spectral shapes. The images came from glass slides, but the movements of the smoke gave them a ghoulish kind of life."[1] Sir David Brewster, the inventor of the lenticular stereoscope, speculated in his *Letters on Natural Magic*[2] that projected images on smoke may have been used in the ancient world by priests to summon "spirits" for worshipers and invoke awe on ritual occasions. Brewster even suggested that these priests might have utilized mirrors to focus light in the manner of a magic lantern.

As early as 1613, the phrase "stereoscopic projection" had been used in his treatise on optics by Francois d'Aguilon, a Jesuit monk from Brussels.[3] According to Mark H. Gosser, however, d'Aquilon's use of the term "had nothing to do with the reproduction of images on a screen."[4] Martin Quigley Jr. notes that Claude Francois Milliet de Chales, a rector at Chambery, France, had made improvements to the magic lantern of Athanasius Kircher and had "studied the eye and knew that the image is upside down on the retina. He investigated other vision problems, including angular vision and vision at long range, considered binocular vision and the images formed by each eye."[5] Without providing direct quotation, Quigley asserts that De Chales, in his monumental work of 1674, *Cursus seu Mundus Mathematicus* ("The Mathematical World"), wrote about "the nature of color and the laws of light. De Chales even attempted three dimension projection!

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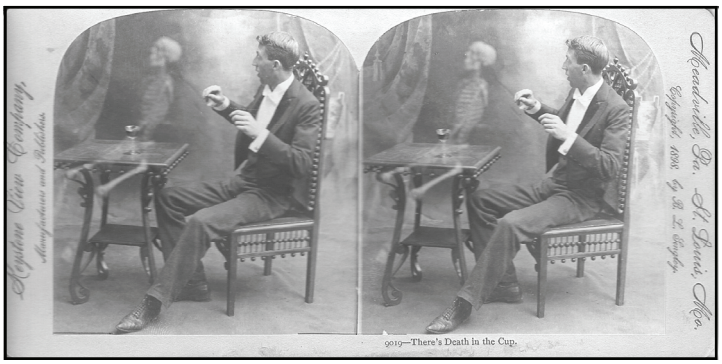
Robertson's Phantasmagoria projected on smoke from coal burning in braziers.

"Even now," Quigley wrote in 1947, "many efforts are being made to achieve 'three dimension' motion pictures without the use of special glasses or other viewing devices for the spectators."[6]

Although true stereoscopic projection was not developed until the 19th Century, the fascination with ghosts and spirits that had been exploited by the Phantasmagoria continued into the photographic era. From the earliest days of the stereoview card, ghosts and spirit images were popular themes. From 1850 to 1900, different manufacturers produced a variety of stereoscopic scenes featuring spirit images of mothers and children, or skeletal phantoms serving up spectral admonitions about sex, alcohol, and gambling. The transparent phantom figures in these stereoview cards were produced by having an actor appear in a predetermined position for only two or three seconds during the photographic exposure which would last as long as ten seconds or more. These cards provided dramatic effects for individual viewers, but did not solve the problem of projecting such images on a screen.

Evolution of the Anaglyph

E.J. Wall suggested that as early as 1717 attempts at stereoscopic projection evolved from experiments with colored glass and complementary colors.[7] By 1841, a German scientist, Heinrich Wilhelm Dove, had developed a subtractive



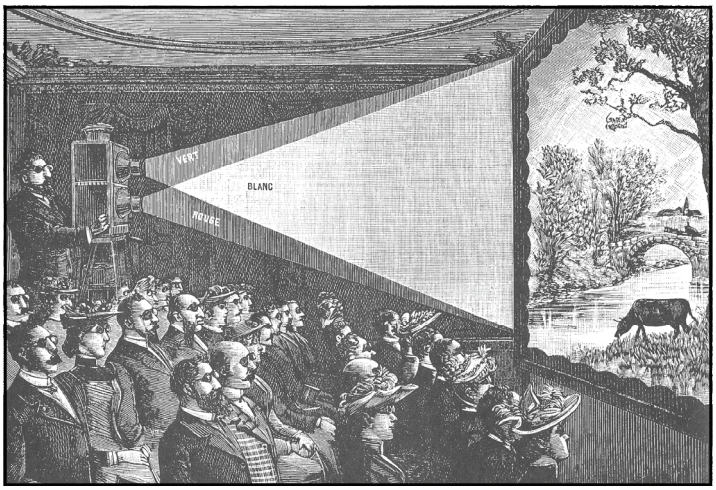
Stereoview cards featuring ghosts and spirits were popular from 1850 to 1900. Top: "There's Death in the Cup." Bottom: "An Unwelcome Visitor."

printing process.[8] Complementary-colored stereoscopic methods were either additive or subtractive. With colors combined in additive, light transmissive methods, the result is white. With colors combined in subtractive methods, for reflection, black is produced. Dove was alleged to have presented one image of a stereo pair in blue on a white ground and the other image in red. When the superimposed images were viewed with red and blue glasses a black object on a white ground was visible in three dimensions. Wilhelm Rollman, a German, was familiar with Dove's work and in 1853 discussed a complementary color process for subtractive filtration in which stereoscopic drawings rendered with blue and yellow lines were viewed through red and blue lenses.[9] Rollman could have been the first to project images with complementary colors.

The first to project stereoscopic images using complementary colors in France was Charles d'Almeida. In 1858 d'Almeida placed red and green filters over two magic lanterns and provided the audience with red and green glasses. "I set out to produce an arrangement," wrote d'Almeida where "the three dimensional images could be seen from various points in the room."[10] In the same paper d'Almeida considered the possibility of projected stereoscopic images in motion. "In ending this note," wrote d'Almeida, "I do think I am occupied at this moment in discovering a simple combination which will allow me to give the movement of images and to reproduce in relief the effects of the phenakistiscope. This will be a new method of demonstration that the discovery of Wheatstone will bring to the sciences, especially in mechanics and astronomy."[11]

Alfred Molteni, an optician and manufacturer of magic lanterns from Paris, became renowned in 1890 for his anaglyphic magic lantern shows. These shows were projected with a "biunnial" magic lantern having two vertically stacked projection lenses. Molteni attributed the invention of the anaglyphic projection process to d'Almeida.[12] When Molteni projected his anaglyph lantern shows in Paris in 1890, much interest was generated on the part of his scientific colleagues. In a hand-written letter to Jules-Etienne Marey dated December 5, 1890, Molteni explained the process:

> A double apparatus is used consisting of two lanterns which have been rendered convergent so that they project on to the same point on the screen. One of the sides of a stereoscopic image on glass is placed into one of the lanterns: the second image goes in the other lantern. Behind one of the photographs there is a red glass, behind the other a green glass. Thus there is both a green image and a red image on the screen. If the viewer now puts on a pair of spectacles with the green glass over one eye and red glass over the other, as each eye sees a distinct image, a sensation of three dimensions is created immediately and is very pronounced in some images.[13]



Engraving of Alfred Molteni projecting anaglyph with a biunnial magic lantern.

Early in 1896, an inventor from Lyon named Paul Mortier created a "reversible" stereoscopic cinematographic camera that he called the "Alethoscope" and patented it in France on February 17, 1896. "Coloured filters in complementary colours must be placed in front of the projection lenses," wrote Mortier, "and the spectators must be provided with similarly coloured spectacles (anaglyphic process)."[14] Mortier also specified a complex system with glasses using alternating shutters driven by electric current. The glasses were synchronized to the shutters running in two interlocked magic lanterns with everything running off alternating current. A small multipolar alternator kept everything synchronized.

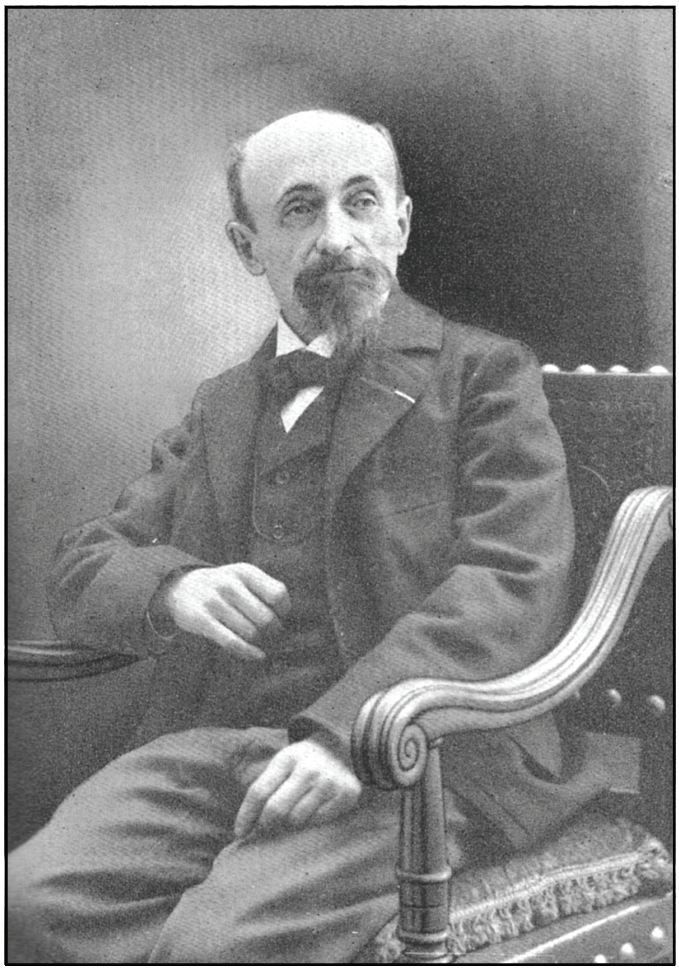
One of two surviving Molteni biunnial magic lanterns. Courtesy of Erkki Huhtamo.

August Rateau, a Frenchman residing in London, developed a similar process in 1897 using two cameras recording alternate left-right views and projecting them on a screen with a shutter in the projector that was synchronized for viewing with binocular style goggles.[15] Claude Louis Grivolas was an electrical engineer in France who was interested in cinematic illusion. In working with French film pioneer Charles Pathe in 1897, Grivolas attempted to build a system that used forty frames per second and at the same time began to experiment with stereoscopic motion pictures. Two of Grivolas's 1897 French patents (No. 263,574 and No. 266,131) were for a combination camera and projector device that used parallel lenses with over a four inch separation and rotating shutters that alternately eclipsed the left and right eye images.

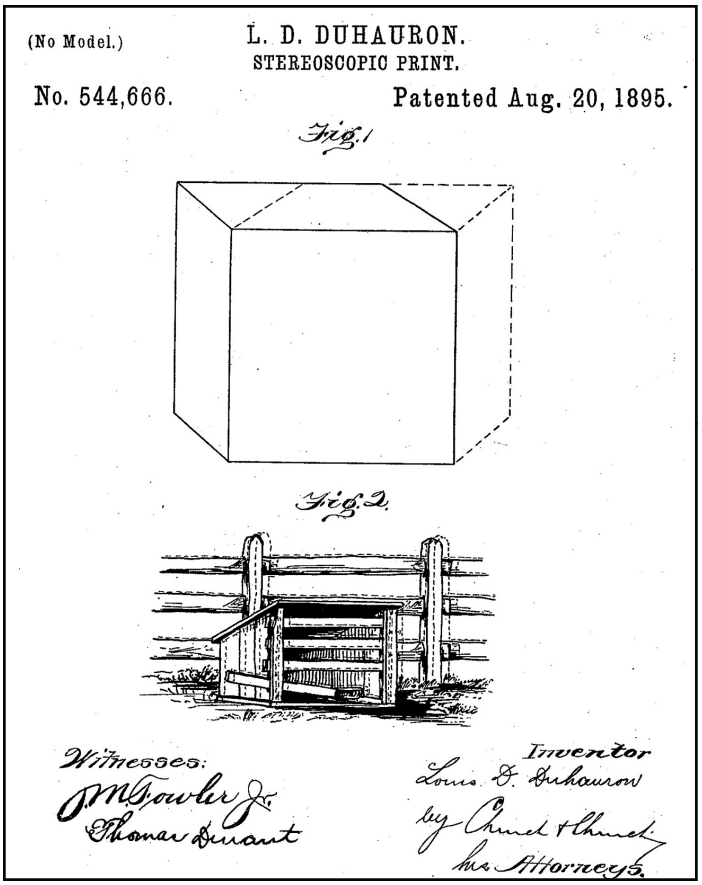
Grivolas improved his system in 1901 (French Patent No. 310,864 and British Patent No. 10,695) by optically printing the twin strip stereo photography onto a single strip of film for projection with the left and right eye views alternately printed.[16] His projection machine utilized red and blue color filters with a four-part shutter with two opaque and two transparent sections. The audience used red and blue glasses to view the alternate frame anaglyph motion picture.[17]

The Marvelous Ducos du Hauron

It is to Louis Ducos du Hauron of Algiers that we owe the term "anaglyph." Originating from the Greek, it translates literally as "again – sculpture." Many of the 3-D pioneers, like du Hauron, the Lumiere brothers and Frederick E. Ives, were exploring the nature of color in photography and it was through this work that their invention of anaglyphic processes came about. The thrust of their efforts was to create a more perfect replication of nature through photographic reproduction and the attempts to capture color as well as 3-D information in an image can be seen as an expression of that goal. Their early efforts eventually led to anaglyphic projection of motion pictures.



Louis Ducos du Hauron of Algiers, the discoverer of subtractive filtration.


(No Model.)

L. D. DUHAURON.

STEREOSCOPIC PRINT.

No. 544,666. Patented Aug. 20, 1895.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2.

Witnesses:
M. M. Fowler Jr.
Thomas Durant

Inventor
Louis D. Duhauron
by Munn & Munn
his Attorneys.

Ducos du Hauron's U. S. Patent showing the principle of anaglyph printing.

With a letter of 1862 du Hauron had clarified the specific nature of subtractive filtration:

> Physical Solution of the Problem of Reproducing Colors by Photography. -- The method which I propose is based on the principle that the simple colors are reduced to three--red, yellow and blue--the combinations of which in different proportions give us the infinite variety of shades we see in nature. One may now say that analysis of the solar spectrum by means of a glass which passes only one color has proved that red exists in all parts of the spectrum, and the like for yellow and blue, and that one is forced to admit that the solar spectrum is formed of three superposed spectra having their maxima of intensity at different points.[18]

In 1862, du Hauron also described a design for a camera that made three separate negatives with a single exposure using angled transparent mirrors, a precursor of modern one-shot cameras. By exposing black and white negative film through filters of these colors, a three-color separation was produced. This is the underlying principle behind all color printing. In 1870 du Hauron printed a three-color stone lithograph design that demonstrated his principle. With subtractive filtration in the anaglyph, it can be seen that the red lens sees the blue image and cancels out the red. The blue sees the red and cancels blue. Because a given color filter cancels out the same color in the photo or print it is called "subtractive."

In 1891 in France, du Hauron registered a patent (No. 216,465) for anaglyphs which he subsequently registered in the United States on August 20, 1895 as Patent No. 544,666 titled "Stereoscopic Print." Du Hauron acknowledges that "Mr. D'Almeida, a French Physician, and after him, Mr. Molteni, have obtained in a very elegant way the production of double images arranged for binocular vision and united in a single picture when properly viewed."[19]

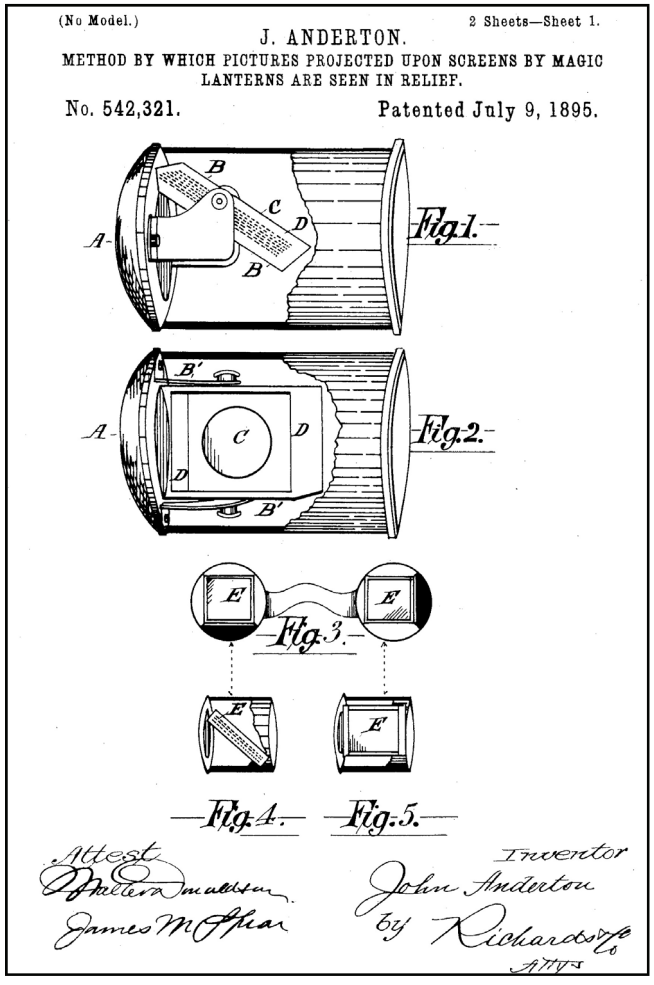
Polarized Light Processes

The anaglyph was not the only method used to separate left and right eye images for stereoscopic projection in the 19th century. Polarized light projection was used with magic lanterns for stereo projection of slides by John Anderton in 1891. Polarization of light is possible because light vibrates on a plane and can be made to transmit light at different angles when projected through quartz, tourmaline, crystals of calcite and other translucent materials. Erasmus Bartholinus, a Danish physician, discovered polarization in 1669 when looking through a piece of Iceland spar crystal and noticed that light passing through the different facets of the crystal was split into two parts. Bartholinus designated this splitting of the light as a "double refraction" or "birefringence."[20]

A Scottish physicist named William Nicols in 1828 diagonally split an Iceland spar crystal and glued the two parts back together. Light entering the split crystal was transmitted in two different directions. This split spar crystal became known as "Nicol's Prism." A British physicist named John Anderton used a modified Nicol Prism for a stereoscopic projection system patented in the United States on July 9, 1895 (No. 542,321) as a "Method By Which Pictures Projected Upon Screens by Magic Lanterns are Seen in Relief" after having first taken out patents in Great Britain (No. 11,520) and France (No. 224,813). Anderton's projection produced a stereoscopic effect "by employing two polarizers arranged at right angles to each other and in separate lanterns, in combination with a pair of analyzers [glasses] having polarizers therein arranged at right angles to each other, the analyzer for one eye being adapted to obliterate the picture produced by one lantern while permitting the picture produced by the other lantern to be seen. . ."[21]

The polarizers in Anderton's system consisted of a "bundle of thin glass plates" arranged so as to produce "polarization by transmission" and affording "the means to the observer of obliterating the image at will."[22] In this manner,

"a separate picture is conveyed to each eye, and as these pictures form a stereoscopic pair the impression is irresistibly conveyed to the mind of one picture only, and that a solid one."[23] A distinct advantage of polarizing projection, as opposed to anaglyphic projection of stereoscopic images, is the fact that "colored pictures may be utilized as readily as those in black and white"[24] without any detriment to the color values in the image. The analyzers in Anderton's system consisted of "small opera glasses or any other suitable form" and "the slides used in the lantern are prepared in the ordinary way from a stereoscopic negative – that is, a negative consisting of two pictures of the same object taken from different points of view." A silver screen is necessary for polarizing projection to maintain the specific linear axis of light for transmission or blocking of the left and right eye images. One of the drawings in Anderton's patent depicts the "non-depolarizing screen" upon which the stereoscopic images are projected. "Said screen may be of calico or other material having a coating of silver or other metallic elements or compound, ground glass, metal, or other suitable substance, the essential characteristic being that it is of a non-depolarizing nature."[25]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J. ANDERTON.

METHOD BY WHICH PICTURES PROJECTED UPON SCREENS BY MAGIC LANTERNS ARE SEEN IN RELIEF.

No. 542,321. Patented July 9, 1895.

Fig.1. Fig.2. Fig.3. Fig.4. Fig.5.

Attest James McShea

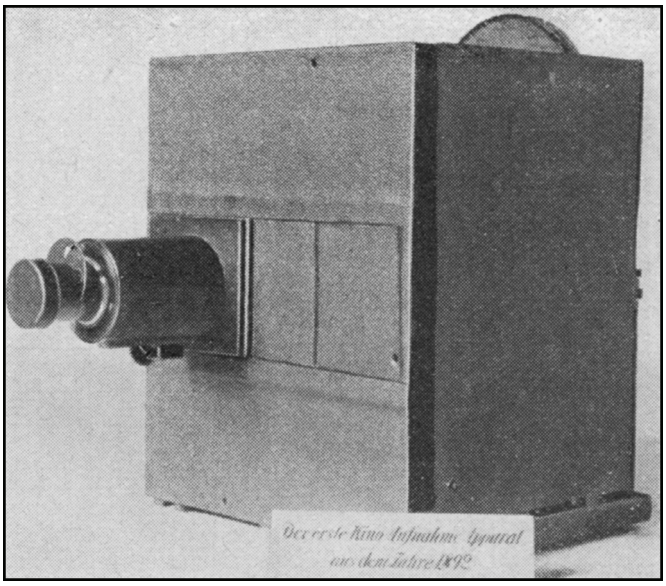
Inventor John Anderton by Richards & Co Attys

Anderton's U.S. Patent for stereoscopic projection using polarizing filters and two magic lanterns.

Both anaglyphic and polarizing projection of stereoscopic motion pictures would be used in the 20th century. While polarizing projection had the advantage of depicting full-color images in stereo, the use of anaglyph projection eliminated the necessity for a silver, or non-depolarizing, screen.

From Bioscope to Alabastra

Max and Emil Skladanowsky were magic lantern showmen in Germany who inherited the business from their father who had been creating 'dissolving views' for many years. From 1892 to 1895, Max, the technical genius of the pair, created what was called the "Bioscope" projector for showing a series of photographs captured on Eastman Kodak celluloid film 44 and 1/2 millimeters wide (split 89mm stock).[26] The Bioscope was a double projector with a speed of eight frames a second running two strips of celluloid carrying twenty pictures each advanced with intermittent movement using a worm gear mechanism patented (No. 88,599) on the same day the brothers began public projection with their device. On November 1, 1895 the Skladanowsky brothers set up their Bioscope projector in the Berlin Wintergarden and showed a program of two children doing a dance, gymnasts working out, a juggler, and a kangaroo boxing match.[27]



Skladanowsky projector showing opening for a second lens. Courtesy of Alexander Klein.

Max Skladanowsky, as early as 1903, produced a series of anaglyph booklets with scenic views of Europe and Germany. Did Skladanowsky ever produce a stereo Bioscope camera or projector? In a June 29, 2005 email to the author, historian Alexander Klein cited an article written by Erich Skladanowsky, Max's son, in the November 1955 issue of

Image and Sound magazine.[28] In this article, Erich stated that his father "had made arrangements for an upgrade [to the Bioscope camera] to shoot stereo." Drawings and photos of the Bioscope camera, Klein noted, "clearly show the space for a second lens and film spool; the photos show the same: the space for the second lens is closed by a piece of wood."[29] Klein concluded by writing that "it's most unlikely that Skladanowsky ever shot stereo movies. But based on his 1903 anaglyph experiments, he certainly had intended to shoot in stereo."[30]

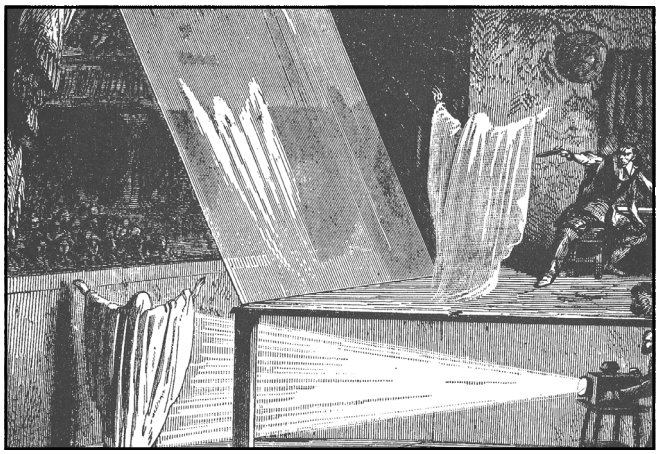
An inventor named Oskar Messter had seen the Bioscope projections at the Wintergarden and decided to build his own projectors using, initially, a Geneva movement with five slots and subsequently a four-slotted Geneva cross. "It was Messter, and not Skladanowski [sic]," writes Gosser, "who was the most significant figure in building a German film industry."[31] "A process to achieve a three-dimensional screen image interested Messter from the beginning,"[32] writes Albert Narath. On July 23, 1896 Messter had filed a patent application for a "stereo rapid viewer"[33] but the patent was not granted.

Messter became intrigued with "Pepper's Ghost" images in 1909 as practiced by Engelmann. This style of cinematographic projection dates back to 1862. The audience was actually looking through a plate of glass carrying a reflection at a forty-five degree angle. The reflection was seen on a different plane and appeared to float over the background projection. "Due to dimensional differences on the film, viewers 'saw' the persons move both back and forth, so that an illusion of depth was sensed."[34] Messter created a projection system based on "Pepper's Ghost" which he called "Alabastra" and presented color-tinted movies with music and song accompaniment, receiving excellent notices from the press. Subsequently, at the Court Theater in Darmstadt, the Czar of Russia and Prince Heinrich of Prussia attended such presentations.

A Professor Thorner, to optimize the background projection, developed a process where a special projector incorporated a half-silvered mirror over a concave mirror to reflect the movement of the actors above the background. A German patent (No. 598,712) for this process was applied for on May 19, 1932 and Messter carried out practical experiments using the system. "It could not gain acceptance," writes Narath, "because the manufacture of similar mirrors was expensive and dimensionally limited."[35]

Origins of Pepper's Ghost

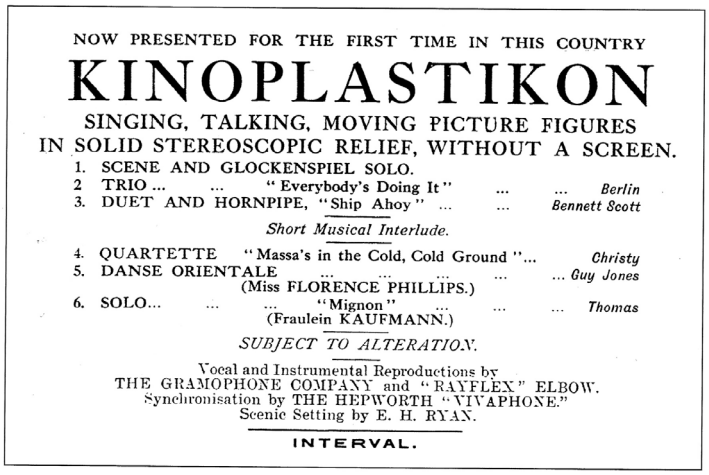
The invention of limelight in 1820 provided a powerful new tool for the magician to create optical effects and illusions. In 1847, the magician Henri Robin was using limelight for his Living Phantasmagoria illusions and he established his own theater in Paris – the Theater Robin - to display them. In London the Royal Polytechnic Institution opened in 1838 and in the 1860s began to feature spectacular sideshows touted as Wonders of Optical Science with magic lantern illusions. Because Professor John Henry Pepper was director of the Polytechnic during the period in which the enormously popular magic lantern spectacles were presented, the visual effects came to be known as "Pepper's Ghost Illusion." Utilizing a very large sheet of glass tilted at a forty-five degree angle to the audience, apparitions would seem to appear in the midst of live actors on the three-dimensional stage. Because the new projection techniques incorporated live actors, they were characterized as "Living" Phantasmagoria.



Pepper's Ghost illusion as revealed in a 19th Century engraving.

A civil engineer named Henry Dircks developed some of the new techniques for projection which he explained in his 1864 book *The Ghost!*.[36] "Pepper's Ghost" illusions were used in a stage dramatization of Charles Dickens' 1843 story, *A Christmas Carol*. The Polytechnic also presented Temptations of Saint Anthony with the saint visited by spectral women. When Messter's "Alabastra," sometimes characterized as "Stereoplastics," was exhibited in London in 1911, stereographer Theodore Brown became interested in the "Pepper's Ghost" process and created refinements for it that he subsequently patented and renamed "Kinoplastikon."[37] A review in the March 20, 1913 issue of *The Bioscope* magazine by "OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JOHN CHER" described a performance:

> At the Kinoplastikon Theatre I had the pleasure of inspecting the stereoscopic moving pictures of which so much has been heard and so little seen in England. The hall is underground. The sheet hangs far back, on a level with the stage. Amongst other reels, a "Pathe Gazette" was shown. . . Never before had I witnessed such a moving picture spectacle. It was practically the illusion of life, remarkable and astonishing, almost uncanny in its realness.[38]



NOW PRESENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS COUNTRY

KINOPLASTIKON

SINGING, TALKING, MOVING PICTURE FIGURES
IN SOLID STEREOSCOPIC RELIEF, WITHOUT A SCREEN.

1. SCENE AND GLOCKENSPIEL SOLO.
2 TRIO ... ... "Everybody's Doing It" ... ... *Berlin*
3. DUET AND HORNPIPE, "Ship Ahoy" ... ... *Bennett Scott*

Short Musical Interlude.

4. QUARTETTE "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground"... *Christy*
5. DANSE ORIENTALE ... ... *Guy Jones*
(Miss FLORENCE PHILLIPS.)
6. SOLO... ... ... "Mignon" ... ... *Thomas*
(Fraulein KAUFMANN.)

SUBJECT TO ALTERATION.

Vocal and Instrumental Reproductions by
THE GRAMOPHONE COMPANY and "RAYFLEX" ELBOW.
Synchronisation by THE HEPWORTH "VIVAPHONE."
Scenic Setting by E. H. RYAN.

INTERVAL.

Program for the Kinoplastikon at the Scala Theater in London. Courtesy of Stephen Herbert.

Brown had applied for a Kinoplastikon patent just days before the performance witnessed by Cher. The patent was titled "Improvements in Cinematograph Apparatus for producing Stereoscopic or Plastic Effects"[39] and made use of a dark chamber immediately behind the glass reflection. The Kinoplastikon performances took place at the Scala Theater in London, a 920-seat venue off Tottenham Court Road which Charles Urban was also using for presentations of his "Kinemacolor" motion picture program.

On April 28, 1913 a reporter for *The Times* wrote: "Visitors to the Scala Theatre last week were able to see the latest development of the cinematographic art – living stereoscopic pictures shown without a screen. With the production of living pictures in their natural colours it was thought that all that was possible had been achieved, but Kinoplastikon takes us a step further."[40] Stephen Herbert points out that it is likely that Kinemacolor motion pictures were projected for the Kinoplastikon presentations. Cecil Hepworth's "Vivaphone" synchronized sound process provided aural accompaniment, using a large horn and a gramophone.[41]

An advertisement for the Kinoplastikon program heralded "An Amazing Mystery Seen for the First Time in This Country, Living, Singing, Talking Cameo Pictures in Plastic Relief Without a Screen."[42] Programs handed out at the Scala Theater presentations trumpeted the Kinoplastikon as "Singing, Talking, Moving Picture Figures in Solid Stereoscopic Relief, Without a Screen."[43] Despite its lively, short-term success in 1913, Brown's Kinoplastikon did not continue to develop as a part of the motion picture landscape. "Pepper's Ghost," however, remains in use in the 21st century at theme parks such as Disneyland in Anaheim, California, with the "Haunted Mansion" attraction, and at The Gene Autry Western Museum in Los Angeles.

Stereoscopic Cinema Begins

Fascination with the larger-than-life realism of the projected image lay at the heart of the magic lantern exhibitions that preceded and overlapped the beginnings of motion picture presentation. There was, consequently, a general confusion on the part of the press and public as to the two modes of representation. C. Francis Jenkins, in his 1898 *Animated Pictures* book, delineated their similarities:

> The fact is, the moving picture machine is simply a modified stereopticon or lantern, i.e. a lantern equipped with a mechanical slide changer. All stereopticons will, sooner or later, as are several machines now, be arranged to project stationary pictures or pictures giving the appearance of objects in motion.[44]

The year 1895 marked a watershed for motion pictures. It was the year that motion pictures, in the form that the 20th century experienced them, were first publicly exhibited. First, the Skladanowsky brothers exhibited the Bioscope films on November 1 at the Wintergarden Theater in Berlin. Then, on December 28, the Lumiere brothers gave the first public exhibition of Cinematographe films at the Grand Café in Paris at 14 Boulevard des Capucines. As the nascent motion picture industry evolved, magic lantern slides were projected between short films. By 1905, when the Nickelodeon era of purpose-built movie theaters had commenced, lantern slides, many of them featuring lyrics to popular songs for audience participation, were standard fare on many programs. On June 10, 1915 at the Astor Theater in New York, with dual interlocked 35mm film projectors fitted with red and green filters, anaglyphic motion pictures were projected on a screen by Edwin S. Porter and William E. Waddell. Stereoscopic cinema had officially begun. That moment represented a synthesis of the new motion picture technology with the prior arts of the magic lantern and stereography.

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21. Anderton, John, "Method By Which Pictures Projected Upon Screens by Magic Lanterns Are Seen in Relief," United States Patent No. 542,321 (July 9, 1895), p. 3.

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24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

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38. Cher, John, "A Glimpse of Vienna and the Kinoplasticon," *The Bioscope*, March 20, 1913.

39. Brown, Theodore, "Improvements in Cinematograph Apparatus for producing Stereoscopic or Plastic Effects," British Patent No. 6557, 1913.

40. *The Times*, April 28, 1913.

41. Herbert, p. 86.

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44. Jenkins, C. Francis, *Animated Pictures* (Washington D.C.: H.L. McQueen, 1898).

A First-Hand Account of Stereoscopic Projection

This account of John Anderton's polarizing system of stereoscopic projection is excerpted from *Scientific American*, Nov. 12, 1892, p. 308, which in turn copied it from *Photographic Work*—The Editor.

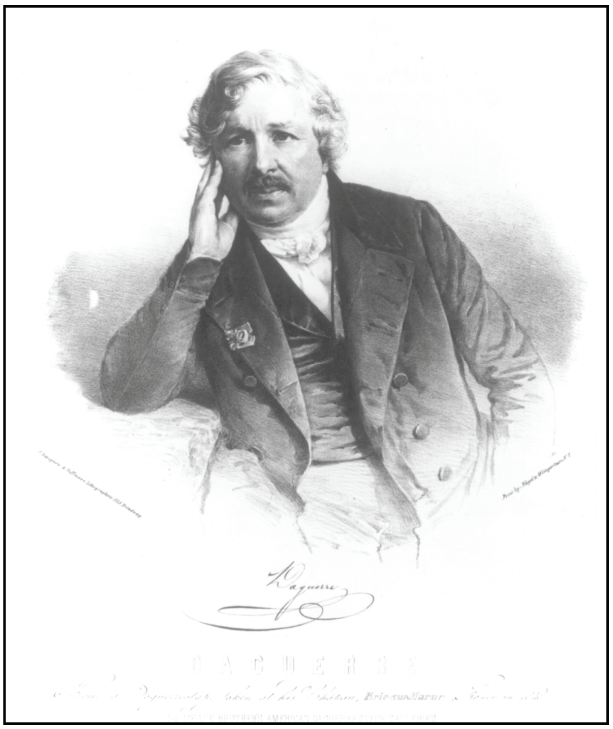
"On taking a seat I was handed a simple-looking apparatus, something like an opera glass with a handle….I looked at the pictures when thrown on the screen through this glass. The first picture...was the interior of Leburgh Abbey. Viewed without the eye-glasses it presented the appearance of an ordinary lantern picture having some of the details slightly blurred. Some alterations were evidently in progress, and a long ladder could be seen lying on the floor with its end toward the spectators. I then looked through the eye-glass, and the whole scene was instantly changed. The architectural details of the building stood out in bold relief. The male figure in the middle distance started into apparent life, and the vista of the aisle stretched out into magnificent perspective, while each rung of the ladder was in stereoscopic relief. The next picture was a splendid colored tiger. This and other natural history subjects were taken from instantaneous photographs of the animals in the Zoological Gardens, and the results were almost startling in their realism. The next picture, of a group of elands, showed in a very marked manner the impossibility of superimposing two dissimilar pictures so as to register accurately. A juvenile eland in the background had so abnormally large a number of legs as to qualify him for a very high position in a museum as a monstrosity. On looking through the eye-glass, however, the extra legs disappeared, and the whole group stood out stereoscopically in a most life-like manner."

A Dioramic Discovery

Erkki Huhtamo,
UCLA Department of Design /Media Arts, Broad Art Center, Rm. 2275, Box 951456, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1456 (erhuhta@ucla.edu)

What does the sleepy small town of Bry-sur-Marne, located on the outskirts of Paris, have to do with the history of visual media? For anyone interested in finding out, a clue will be provided by a statue standing in the middle of a traffic circle at the entrance to the tiny town centre. The monument commemorates no lesser figure than Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851). Daguerre's achievements are listed on three sides of the pedestal: Diorama, Photography, Painting. Indeed, the traffic circle itself is named "Place Daguerre", and a few yards away there is a "Salle Daguerre".

The Daguerre monument, Bry-sur-Marne, France. Photo by Erkki Huhtamo.



Engraved portrait of Louis Daguerre, from a Daguerreotype. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Why Bry-sur-Marne? Here is an explanation: towards the end of 1839 Daguerre - famous as a painter, as the creator of a new spectacle, the Diorama, and as the father of the Daguerreotype, the first perfected photographic process - left Paris behind and retired on a property he had bought from Bry-sur-Marne. Some months earlier he had ceded the Daguerreotype to the French government against a state pension. In March, the Paris Diorama had been entirely destroyed by fire. Obviously, it was the right moment to go.

Daguerre spent the remaining years of his life in Bry-sur-Marne, making new friends, documenting his new community with occasional daguerreotypes and becoming a member of the town council. He was buried in the local cemetery. However, he also performed one final creative act that gives a reason for this article. For the local church of Saint Gervais – Saint Protais that stands just a few yards from where Daguerre used to live, he painted his last Diorama (1842) – incidentally, the only one that survives.

Entering the small church, one immediately notices Daguerre's huge painting in the end of the hall, behind the main altar. Through a large square opening in the back wall, one detects the vaulted nave of a huge Gothic cathedral that seems to extend to the distance - a virtual continuation to

the actual church. Getting closer, one starts to notice details, such as paintings-within-painting one might swear are really hanging from the 'pillars' of the 'cathedral'. Above the nave, there is a crucifix. As might be expected, the effect is truly "photorealistic".

Although the visual illusion is still impressive, originally it must have been much more amazing. True to the principles of Diorama painting, Daguerre's huge canvas was translucent and painted from both sides. A special annex with a glass facade was built behind it, so that daylight could illuminate Daguerre's virtual cathedral in the manner of the paintings shown at the Paris Diorama (several had depicted cathedral interiors). Daguerre requested all kinds of changes to the architecture of the church to maximize the drama of light and shadow. Obviously proud of his achievement, he documented the church with its new annex in a daguerreotype that survives.

Unfortunately, later restorations have spoiled the Diorama effect. In the 1940s the painting that was in brittle condition was attached to another – opaque - canvas; the windows of the annex have also been covered by a solid wall, purportedly to protect the painting from light (!) and humidity. What is left can be hardly called a Diorama anymore in the proper sense of the word. Still, another restoration project has been launched recently with the aim of reviving the original character of the painting; there is still hope.

Daguerre's last Diorama, in the church of Bry-sur-Marne, France. Photo by Erkki Huhtamo.

Daguerre display in the town hall of Bry-sur-Marne, France. Photo by Erkki Huhtamo.

At the moment the best way of getting an idea about the original effect of the Diorama is to cross the street and enter the town hall. On the second floor, there is a back-lighted model of the work, albeit on reduced scale. It is part of a small museum dedicated to Daguerre. It also contains photographic equipment, documents, a few paintings by Daguerre and even the figure of a lanternist and a few magic lanterns – probably mainly for period atmosphere, because Daguerre himself is not known to have used magic lanterns.

Interestingly, there is also a display dedicated to another celebrity who has a link with visual culture: Etienne de Silhouette (1709-1767). De Silhouette is remembered as the Controller-General of Finances under Louis XV, as well as a writer and translator. However, he also gave his name to "silhouette images", probably because of the extravagant wall decorations he had had executed for his castle in Bry-sur-Marne. A fascinating coincidence: silhouette drawing and cutting was, of course, one of the predecessors to portrait photography, the real *forte* of the Daguerreotype.

N. M. Mathews, ed. 2005. *Moving Pictures: American Art and Early Film 1880-1910*. Hudson Hills Press, Manchester, VT, in association with the Williams College Museum of Art. $65 (cloth).

Although not a book about magic lanterns *per se*, this attractively produced volume has much to offer Magic Lantern Society members and anyone interested in the interactions between different visual media. It was designed to accompany an exhibition that started at the Williams College Museum of Art in 2005. The exhibition was on view at the Grey Art Gallery of New York University until December 9, 2006 and is due to travel to the Phillips Collection in Washington in 2007. The book is a large format volume, with abundant color and halftone illustrations of excellent quality. It also includes a DVD, which can be played only on a computer. This allows the reader to view many short film clips, mostly early Edison films, which appear as still photos in the book, presented alongside other images from the exhibition.

The book was conceived as a collaboration of film and art historians to examine interactions between American art, primarily paintings, and the beginnings of cinema. It gets off to a good start with a very interesting chapter by film historian Charles Musser that covers a variety of topics on the use of images in film and art, with a particularly detailed discussion of Eadweard Muybridge and the influence of his photographs of moving horses on the painting of horses by the leading artists of the day. This chapter, and another by Musser on the role of strongman Eugen Sandow in the visual arts, are richly documented and make the book worthwhile for anyone with an interest in 19th Century visual culture.

Four long chapters by the principal editor, Nancy Mowll Mathews, introduce the major sections of the book: Early Film and American Artistic Traditions, The Body in Motion, The City in Motion, and Art and Film: Interactions. These well-documented and richly illustrated chapters provide discussions and images of everything from Niagara Falls to Winslow Homer's seascapes, boxing paintings and films, life on the streets of New York, and posters and ads for kinetoscopes and movie projectors. Each of the four sections contains several shorter contributions by other scholars. I was particularly struck by the similarity between the paintings and film images of New York street scenes and the photographs by Joseph Byron, Underwood and Underwood, and other New York photographers made at almost exactly the same time.

Many of these chapters mention magic lanterns in passing, and Musser is particularly aware of the importance of magic lanterns in the evolution of the cinema and visual culture in general. Magic lanterns also figure in Nancy Mowll Mathew's chapter on The Body in Motion, which includes images of Loïe Fuller's serpentine dance, illuminated with colors projected from a lantern. The DVD includes an early tinted film clip of Fuller's dance that is much more effective than a still photograph in conveying the magic of this unusual performance. Despite frequent references to magic lanterns, I often thought that authors had missed opportunities to more fully integrate the role of photographic lantern slides into their discussions of the interactions between art and film. Many of the images chosen for this book also were common subjects for lantern slides, including Niagara Falls, city street scenes, the canals of Venice, and trips to World's Fairs. Even some of the paintings chosen for the exhibition were reproduced in black and white or hand-colored photographic lantern slides. Unfortunately, many museums have not paid much attention to lantern slides, or have discarded them from their collections, so many art historians probably are not familiar with the rich range of subjects illustrated by lantern slides and their nearly ubiquitous presence on the lecture and entertainment circuit in the late 19th Century.

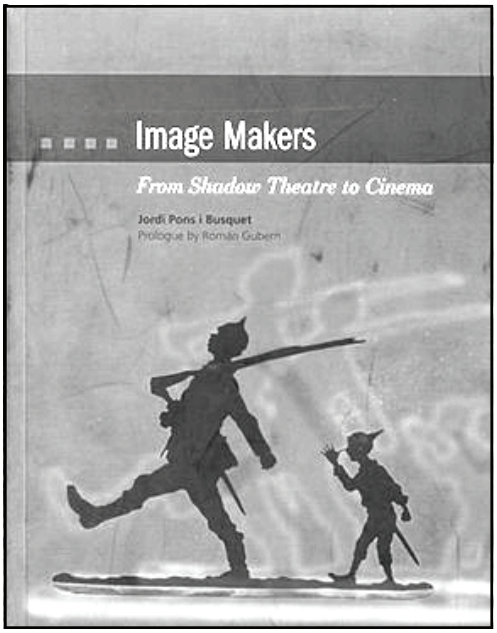
The book has a few other shortcomings. Many of the contributions by authors other than the editor and Musser are very brief, sometimes only four or five pages, and I often found myself wishing for a more detailed treatment. At the same time, there is a bit of redundancy in some of the discussions, because multiple authors cover the same ground, such as Muybridge's photographs of humans and animals in motion. Some of the art historians rely heavily on earlier works of Charles Musser for their discussions of the connections between art and film, resulting in some overlap with what Musser himself has to say in this book. More disconcerting is the use of the same illustrations, all images from the exhibition, in multiple chapters. Hence, we find the same image of strongman Eugen Sandow flexing his muscles in four different chapters; the same color poster of Edison's vitascope in two chapters; and multiple uses of the same images of Muybridge's horse photographs, engravings of a laughing child, and a John Sloan painting of an audience in a movie house. For a relatively expensive book that features a lot of color illustrations, this seems like a waste of space that could have been devoted to other images. There are a few minor factual glitches as well. For example, Nancy Mowll Mathews states on p. 39 that some of Muybridge's credibility "came from the visual authority of his photographs as they appeared all over the world in journal articles and mass-produced photomechanical reproductions." Yet the figure referenced in this statement is not a photomechanical reproduction of a Muybridge photograph, but a cartoon from the *San Francisco Wasp* lampooning Muybridge's photos, depicting horses in impossible positions, with their legs over their backs or covering their eyes. Despite these minor reservations, I recommend the book as a new look at fields of visual culture, American painting and early film, which usually are considered in isolation by very different sets of scholars.—The Editor.

Jord i Pons Busquet. 2006. ***Image Makers: From Shadow Theater to Cinema.*** **Prologue by Roman Gubern. Museu del Cinema, Girona, Spain.** Available directly from the museum (Mr. Jordi Pons, Museu del Cinema-Colleció Tomás Mallol, Sèquia, 1, 17001 Girona (Spain); Tel.: (+34) 972 412 777; Fax: (+34) 972 413 047; jpons@ajgirona.org) or from The Projection Box (s-herbert@easynet.co.uk) for £23.00 + shipping (also frequently listed on EBay).

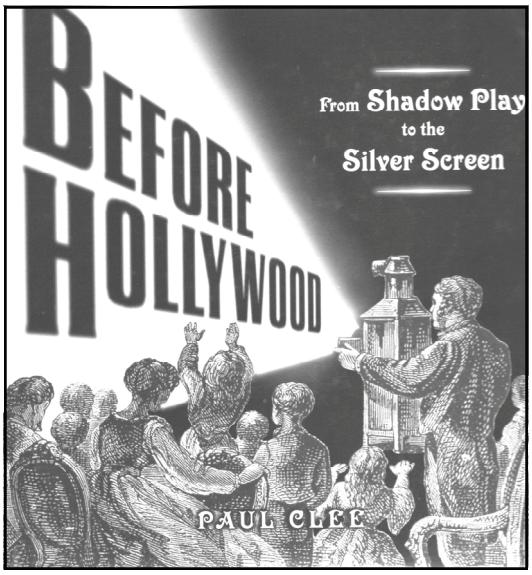
This volume embarks on a journey through five hundred years of the history of visual spectacles and the technique of images, from Chinese shadow puppets to the advent of cinema. The history is a combination – on the one hand- of the passion and obsession of many inventors and scientists who over the centuries have discovered the secrets of the image and - on the other hand - of the fascination of those publics who have contemplated these images in the form of spectacles. This historical review accomplished by means of objects found in Girona's Museu de Cinema, which allows us to trace this evolution step by step, whether seen form the perspective of technology of from that of the visual spectacle.

In total there are more than 300 photographs in this book of instruments and objects, complemented by the text written by Jordi Pons, director of the Museu del Cinema and responsible for cataloging the Tomas Mallol collection after it was acquired by the City of Girona. A specialist in the field of pre-cinema, Pons is the author if various studies and articles that have delved more deeply into the understanding of this collection and the spread of the precedents and origins of cinema.—From the Publisher's description, submitted by Dick Moore.

This book has many excellent color photographs of magic lanterns, slides, peepshows, etc., and it provides a comprehensive guide to this excellent museum, which I visited in 2005—The Editor.



Paul Clee. 2005. ***Before Hollywood: From Shadow Play to the Silver Screen.*** **Clarion Books, New York. 188 pages, illustrated. $22.00 (cloth).**



In this lavishly illustrated book for young adults, professional photographer Paul Clee has given us a well-written and well-designed introduction to the history of the cinema and related forms of visual entertainment. Making use of recent research, including a number of the books published by the Magic Lantern Society in Britain, Clee has produced a surprisingly thorough and detailed history of projected images. He begins with mirrors, the camera obscura, and other early optical devices, but quickly moves on to the magic lantern. The second and third chapters are devoted almost entirely to the magic lantern and phantasmagoria shows, drawing heavily on the research of Mervyn Heard, David Robinson, Deac Rossell, and others. Later chapters deal with optical toys and moving image devices, the photography of Muybridge and Marey, the early days of the cinema, the role of Thomas Edison in commercializing moving pictures, and the beginnings of narrative film.

Although ostensibly aimed at a young audience, the level of research is sufficiently detailed and the style of writing sophisticated enough that even adults who want a clear introduction to the history of the magic lantern and the cinema will find much of interest in this book. The layout, graphics, and photo reproduction all are excellent, and the book is much more successful than an earlier attempt to tell this story to a young audience (Judith Thurman and Jonathan David, *The Magic Lantern: How Movies Got to Move*, Atheneum, New York, 1978). Despite the lack of color illustrations, this is a very attractive volume.

The book includes a useful time line, a detailed bibliography, and perhaps most useful to young readers, a comprehensive list of websites devoted to magic lanterns and cinema history (although not, unfortunately, the website of our society).—The Editor.

Special Feature on Film Museums. 2006. *Film History* 18 (3):235-349.

This entire issue of *Film History* is devoted to film museums, and several articles will be of interest to Magic Lantern Society members. Cinema and magic lantern historian **David Robinson** describes "Film museums I have known and (sometimes) loved" (pp. 237-260), discussing the history and collections of several major film museums. His article tracks the fate of a number of important collections that include major holdings of magic lanterns, including the Will Day Collection (now in Paris) and Barnes collection (now in Turin, Italy). He includes a great photograph of the incredible display of magic lanterns and other optical toys from the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin, which will send members to their travel agents to purchase tickets to Italy. Robinson's article has many sad notes as well, including the 1997 destruction of the original Musée du Cinéma of Henri Langlois by water poured on a fire in the building above (most of the collections on display were saved) and the 2002 fire in a rented storage facility that destroyed most of the invaluable paper collection of Langlois, some 12,000 boxes. Robinson laments the nature of the museum that has now replaced this national treasure, reopened in new quarters in an awkwardly designed Frank Gehry building in 2005. Most of the educational value of the original Langlois museum has now been lost. Robinson also relates the sad fate of the Museum of the Moving Image in London, a spectacular museum with much of interest to magic lantern collectors, which closed after only ten years, despite good attendance. Short-lived attempts at similar museums in the United States also have failed.

Although many of the major cinema museums have disappeared, all is not lost. Museums devoted to the cinema can be found throughout the world, and some of these have collections of magic lanterns. **Stephen Bottomore** provides a comprehensive guide to cinema museums both large and small in "Cinema museums—a worldwide list' (pp. 261-273), which includes a photograph of another lantern display in Turin. Some museums are treated only briefly—the Museu del Cinema in Girona, Spain, for example, is listed only with a website address, but this museum has an outstanding display of magic lanterns. Bottomore also provides a chronological list of articles on film museums in "Film museums: a bibliography" (pp. 327-349). **Laurent Mannoni** offers a detailed history of the development of one of the world's premiere film museums in "Henri Langlois and the Musée du Cinéma" (pp. 274-287). He also relates the sad tale of the ultimate demise of this wonderful museum. **Richard Koszarski** continues the discussion of Langlois with a short account of his unsuccessful attempt to establish a cinema museum under the Queensboro Bridge in New York in "The lost museum of Henri Langlois" (pp. 288-294). These articles provide a comprehensive guide to the major cinema museums of the world, many of which have important collections of magic lanterns, and should be an invaluable guide to scholars and collectors.—The Editor

***Early Popular Visual Culture*, edited by Simon Popple and Vanessa Toulmin. Taylor & Francis.**

Early Popular Visual Culture is a relatively new scholarly journal devoted to "the use and exploitation of popular cultural forms such as...cinema, photography, magic lanterns and music hall within the fields of entertainment, education, science, advertising and the domestic environment…."

Recent issues have included a number of articles of interest to magic lantern scholars and collectors, and even those articles not directly related to magic lanterns contain much useful material on visual spectacles such as exhibitions, museums, carnival side shows, and the like. The first two years of the journal were published under the title *Living Pictures*, but achieved little circulation outside of Britain. The current journal is relatively expensive (about $70 for three issues per year) and unfortunately is difficult to find even in major university libraries.

The first issue of the new journal included a detailed and well illustrated article by Maki Fukuoka on "Contexualizing the peep-box in Tokugawa Japan" (vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 17-42; an article by Ann Fetherstone on "There is a peep-show in the market': gazing at/in the journals of Sydney Race" (pp. 43-57), and most directly related to the magic lantern, an article by Kaveh Askari on "From 'The Horse in Motion' to 'Man in Motion': Alexander Black's Detective Lectures" (pp. 59-76). This last article re-examines Black's famous picture play, "Miss Jerry," in the context of his earlier illustrated lectures delivered to art societies and religious groups. This study is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the culture of lantern lecturers in the late 19th Century and broadens the perspective on such lecturers beyond the usual travelogue genre of John L. Stoddard and Burton Holmes.

The second issue of the journal (vol. 3, no. 2) was entirely devoted to the special topic of "Vice and Immorality in Popular Victorian Culture," with articles on vice and photography (Simon Popple, pp. 113-134), striptease films (Lynda Nead, pp. 135-150), the iconography of snakes and human bodies (Alison Smith, pp. 151-164), and an article by Mervyn Heard on "Pearls Before Swine: A Purient Look at the Magic Lantern" (pp. 179-195), which includes some explicitly pornographic lantern slides that may not be to everyone's taste.

The three issues published in 2006 continued the same eclectic tradition, with articles on topics such as spirit photography (Neil Matheson, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 35-51), Daguerre's Diorama (Andrew Hershberger, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 85-101), public displays of natural phenomena (Amy Sargeant, pp. 103-112), Loïe Fuller's dances (Catherine Hindson, pp. 161-174), 19th Century science museums (Alison Griffiths, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 245-272), and photographing race in the United States in the 19th Century (Mandy Reid, pp. 285-306).

This clearly is a journal aimed at specialist scholars, and the academic jargon can be off-putting at times, but it has much to offer to those with a serious interest in the relationship of magic lanterns to other forms of visual culture. An attractive and necessary feature of a journal like this is the generous use of illustrations, more so than in most academic journals. Each issue also includes a special "Archive Feature," which provides reprints of articles from old periodical literature, handbills, and other visual artifacts. Finally, some issues include book reviews, with serious treatment of books on magic lanterns and other subjects often neglected by other academic journals.—The Editor

2008 Washington Convention
Second Announcement

A festival of Dickens story slides presented from a vintage triunial magic lantern and special presentations at a Smithsonian Museum theater or sumptuous Washington embassy are among the possibilities expected to be included in the 2008 society convention program.

Add to the potential agenda a Potomac River dinner cruise, a workshop on lantern performance, presentations of photographic lantern slide history, a camera obscura, a shadow puppet show and other exciting performances--all are more reasons to mark your calendar and make your reservations now for the convention which will be held Friday, July 11 through Sunday July 13 at the Crowne Plaza (Washington-National Airport) Hotel in Arlington, VA.

The hotel is located on Jefferson Davis Highway just 1.5 miles from the Ronald Reagan National Airport and minutes to Washington's major expressways, monuments, and attractions. It is only 1/2 block from the Crystal City Metro station. More information is available at the hotel web site: cpnationalairport.com

Hotel reservations may be made by calling the hotel directly at 703-416-1600 or at a central reservations system: 800-227-6963. To receive our negotiated reduced rates, identify the Magic Lantern Society at the time of the reservation.

Though planning is well under way, many more program ideas are welcome. Joanne and Harry Elsesser chair the program committee and are accepting proposals for presentations. Brief outlines can be sent to them by email to nx2117@aol.com or mail to 139 Sycamore Circle, Stony Brook, NY 11790. Phone is 631-751-2951.

Tom Rall is convention chairman. He can be contacted by email to marketflea@aol.com or mail to 1101 N Kentucky Street, Arlington, VA 22205. Phone is 703-534-8220.

$1,000 Prize
for
Magic-Lantern Research

The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada announces a $1,000 yearly prize for the best research related to the magic-lantern by a graduate student in the United States or Canada. Winning papers must be at least 15 pages in length, and must not have been published previously. Papers will be judged by a committee of scholars on the basis of originality and substance. The winning paper will published by the Society, or reprinted if the author prefers to publish elsewhere. Other submitted papers may also be selected for publication or reprint.

Submit entries in both paper and electronic form to **Professor Erkki Huhtamo, UCLA Department of Design | Media Arts, Broad Art Center, Rm. 2275, Box 951456 Los Angeles, CA 90095-1456 (erhuhta@ucla.edu).**

The Projection Box Essay Awards

The aims of this award are to encourage new research and new thinking into any historical, artistic or technical aspect of projected and moving images up to 1915; and to promote engaging, accessible, and imaginative work. The first prize of £250 is for an essay of between 5000 and 8000 words (including notes). The deadline for entries is 18 January 2008. The winning essay will also be published in an issue of *Early Popular Visual Culture* (Routledge). At the discretion of the judges, two runners-up will each receive books and CD-roms of their choice (published by The Projection Box), to the value of £100. For further details, go to **http://www.pbawards.co.uk**.

DVDs of the Seattle Convention are Now Ready

DVDs of the 2006 Seattle Convention programs and workshops are available for sale. The cost is $15 for the programs alone, and $15 for the workshops. If both are purchased, the cost is $25. Shipping is free in U.S. International buyers pay postage. Please send checks to Mike Koch, 13540 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380.

John Rogers Statuary Images Wanted

I am interested in purchasing stereoviews, lantern slides and other memorabilia of John Rogers statuary (Rogers Groups), as well as the statues themselves.

Bruce Bleier (Emeralite@aol.com)

News from the Seattle Area Group

In December, the Seattle Area Magic Lantern Society members presented a special program on "Magic Lanterns and the Birth of Photography" at the Burke Museum in Seattle. Ron Easterday began the program with a short overview of lantern slides, tracing the evolution of the art from from Victorian times to 1940. Larry Cederblom contributed information on slide painting materials and techniques and showed some examples of antique slides and painting materials, including slides from the Douglass Light Company, a 1904 Seattle business that sole lanterns and hand-colored slides.

Ron Easterday then gave a show on "The American Civil War: Views of the Rebellion—Marching Thro' Georgia—Bring the Jubilee!" featuring hand drawn and tinted slides accompanied by period music, trivia, and facts about the great American conflict.

Michael Lawlor presented "A Lincoln Travelogue from Quebec to British Colombia in 1905," reprising his presentation at the Seattle convention last summer of Surrick Lincoln's vintage slides of Canada, using Lincoln's original script.

Shel Izen presented a special birthday party show of "Jack and the Beanstalk" with hand-painted English slides, followed by a presentation of rare lantern slides of snowflakes by Wilson A. Bentley (1865-1931) of Jericho, Vermont, made famous by the children's book *Snowflake Bentley*.

Ron Easterday closed the program with the "Emlematic Lecture of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, or what Joshua Leach did after the Civil War." His presentation included a special set of 14 lantern slides used in the initiation ceremony for the organization, accompanied by readings from the 1919 lodge book.

Submitted by Larry Cederblom

Mystery Solved!

In the Fall 2006 issue, we published this slide sent by Bob Bishop and asked if anyone could identify the Rev. J. B. Moskopp mentioned at the bottom. Through the wonders of Google and the Internet, Sue Hall has found the following information:

From the O'Fallon Historical Society of Baker, Montana:

The original Catholic Church was built in 1914. Up to that time services were held by Father Carrol, who came from Wibaux and Father Leahy, who came from Miles City. The contract for the church amounted to $500. The first altars were furnished by Otto Meyer and Ed Herde. These were shipped from Wisconsin. The Parish house was built in 1918. The resident priest was the Reverend J. B. Moskopp.

The church of St. John, the Evangelist, was built in 1911 by church members of the community of Baker. Father J. B. Moskopp was the first pastor, and lived at St. Anthony's, Plevna. He took care of churches at Baker, Ekalaka, Belltower, Mill Iron, Midred, Terry, and Fallon.

Lantern Slides Wanted

Pat Kulaga is interested in buying lantern slides in large or small quantities. Even damaged slides will be purchased. Contact: pkstore2@stereoview.net.

Lantern slide of The Last Supper (Leonardo DaVinci)

Lantern slide of The Last Supper from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play, after DaVinci's painting.

Oberammergau photographs by F. Bruckmann, Munich

Anton Lang as Christ in the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play

Oberammergau lantern slides by T. H. McAllister, New York

The Crucifixion, from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play

The Resurrection, from the 1910 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play

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